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THE BROAD CHURCH

OR

WHAT IS COMING

BY THE

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ETC., ETC.

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CONTENTS.

FOREWORDS ON ROBERT ELSMERE	PAGE I
---------------------------------------	-----------

I.

ARE THE BROAD CHURCH DISHONEST?

"NO!"

1. Men of Intelligence do not attend Church	23
2. The Spirit of Religion survives	24
3. The feeling is without reason—the form incongruous	24
4. An Intellectual Reform required	25
5. The Broad Church	26
6. The Broad Church Method	27
7. What was, what is, what is no longer true	28
8. Tenderness with the Past	28
9. The Broad Church claim Jesus	29
10. And also St. Paul	29
11. And also Luther	30
12. Reform, not Revolt	30
13. What Revolution has cost	31
14. The Mechanism of Reform	31
15. The Thirty-nine Articles are Broad Church	32
16. What has been accomplished	32
17. Reform possible	33
18. An Honest Method	33
19. Diversities of Form, the same Spirit	34
20. The Witness of Law and Politics	35
21. The Broad Church Defence threefold	36
22. Fealty to Terms of Subscription	37
23. Fealty to Church Law impossible	38
24. Fealty to Administration strictly observed	39
25. Fealty to Truth—The Broad Church Triumph—What to do with Dogma	40
26. Papal Infallibility—True—No longer true	41
27. Gathering up the Fragments—Bidding the Dead Letter Live	41

II.

ARE THE CREEDS CREDIBLE?

"YES AND NO!"

	PAGE
28. Yes or No—A Forensic Device—Yes and No	45
29. The Creeds—Spirit and Form	46
30. Forms of Sound Words—The Apostles' Creed	47
31. The Nicene Creed—Arius and Athanasius	47
32. The Athanasian Creed—Athanasius and Anastasius	50
33. Credibility, not Credulity	50
34. Religious Faith and Intellectual Belief	51
35. The Gospel appeals to Credibility, not to Credulity	53
36. The Reformers appeal to Credibility, not Credulity	54
37. The Doctrine of the Unity in the Athanasian Creed and the Articles	57
38. In the Essence and the Spirit	59

III.

IS GOD OMNIPOTENT?

"YES AND NO!"

39. Contact between God and Man—Homogeneity of Mind	63
40. Two Ways of apprehending God—from Without and from Within	63
41. Five Central Points in Man's apprehension of God	65
42. Two Propositions admitted by John Stuart Mill	66
43. God in a sense not Omnipotent	66
44. Certain obvious limitations to all power	67
45. Progressive Moral Development	69
46. God Omnipotent after all, ultimately and for ever	70
47. Our share in the Divine Scheme	71

IV.

WAS JESUS GOD INCARNATE?

"YES AND NO!"

48. The Doctrine of the Incarnation needs restatement	77
49. How can it be done?	78
50. Why must it be done? Our Conception of God has changed	78

	PAGE
51. Complete Human Enclosure in Flesh, or Incarnation im-possible for God	79
52. The Problem—God being as we apprehend Him—How the Incarnation is to be redefined	81
53. The Incarnation not to be Abolished or Denied	82
54. The Story of the Three Synoptics	82
55. The Story of St. John	83
56. Two Theories current of old, Post-natal Transfusion and Pre-natal Infusion	84
57. The Question settled under Constantine	85
58. Which Theory is True?	85
59. Neither Can be Denied or Affirmed	86
60. The Pre-Nicene position best	86
61. Jesus' account of Himself	87
62. Spiritual, not Logical—Religious, not Formal	89
63. The Essential Doctrine	90
64. The Doctrine of Athanasius	90
65. The Doctrine of the Broad Church	91

V.

IS THE IMITATION OF CHRIST POSSIBLE?

“NO AND YES!”

66. Literal Imitation becomes undesirable	95
67. Literal Imitation of Christ impossible	96
68. Modern arguments disposed of—Tolstoi unsound	97
69. The Fallacy in such books as Joshua Davidson	97
70. Early Christian social institutions of necessity transitory	99
71. The sweet reasonableness of Jesus and the unreason of caricatures	99
72. The real Imitatio Christi	100
73. The Christ Ideal—Does it still endure?	101
74. Yes, for it is the Sole Basis of Human Society	101
75. It works in our Law Courts	103
76. And in our Parliaments	103
77. And in our Current Maxims	104
78. And in our Manners	104
79. Capital and Labour and Christianity	105
80. Christianity and the Sexes	105
81. Christ and Marriage	106

	PAGE
82. Christ and Divorce	106
83. Christ's Panacea	107
84. Christ and Avarice	108
85. Christ and the Poor	108

VI.

IS THE HOLY GHOST A REALITY?

"YES!"

86. The Holy Ghost and the Trinity	111
87. Grounds for Belief in God'	112
88. How God and Man hold Communion	113
89. The Reality of Spirit	114
90. The All-importance of Mind	115
91. Spirit Triumphs over Matter	116
92. Mind acts on Mind—The Dawn of a new Era	116
93. The difference between Past and Present Phenomena	118
94. This development non-moral intrinsically	119
95. But it needs a Divine Controlling Influence	121
96. The Divine Communion—Its Secret unknown	122
97. Its Method explained	122
98. The Laws of Holy Influences	123
99. Attainable Mental Attributes	123
100. God's Special Instruments	124

VII.

IS THE CHURCH A FIGMENT?

"NO!"

101. Is the Church a Figment?	127
102. Are its Aims illusory?	127
103. Reasons, no Reason	128
104. The Church still radiates Influence	129
105. The Church Universal	130
106. The Two Key-notes	130
107. Belief in the Divine Power	130
108. The Institution which embodies the Belief	130
109. The Christian Church's Foundation	131
110. Three Realities	131
111. Divine Authority	131
112. The Reasons	132

	PAGE
113. Persistent Form	132
114. Regenerating Power	133
115. The Holy Catholic Church	138

VIII.

"ARE THE CLERGY OBSOLETE?"

"NO!"

116. Are the Clergy Obsolete?	141
117. A Common-sense Reply	141
118. Five Questions	142
119. The Power of the Priesthood	142
120. The Church and the Family	143
121. Patriarch v. Priest	143
122. Routine	144
123. The Weakness of the Priesthood	144
124. The Prophet	145
125. The Hireling	146
126. The Ideal Priest	147
127. The Priest's Ideal	148
128. The Popular Sphere of the Priest	149
129. John Baptist and the People	149
130. Things fit for the Pulpit	150
131. Preaching the Gospel	150
132. The Priest a Representative	151
133. From Moses to St. John	151
134. Absolution	152
135. All Priests unto God	152
136. The Priestly Sphere of the People	153

IX.

"ARE THE SAINTS INTELLIGIBLE?"

"YES!"

137. The Common Notion of Saint	155
138. The True Saint	156
139. Two Keys	157
140. Three Characteristics	157
141. The Test of History	159
142. St. Simeon Stylites	159
143. A Noble Reaction—Not a Rule of Life	161
144. St. Cuthbert	163

	PAGE
145. St. Bernard	165
146. St. Francis d' Assissi	167
147. St. Francis de Sales	169
148. The Sainly Vocation, the Sainly Spirit	173

X.

"IS THE GREAT HEREAFTER A DREAM?"

"NO!"

149. What Next?	179
150. Shall we be there?	179
151. The Spiritual Instinct	180
152. The Inevitable	181
153. Unreal Immortality	181
154. Personal Immortality	182
155. Oppositions of Science	183
156. Scientific Agnosticism	184
157. A Divine Sensibility	185
158. A Rational Hypothesis	186
159. A Rational Assumption	187
160. Rational Witnesses	188
161. Subject Matter for Materialists	189
162. The Past	190
163. The Poet's Testimony	191
164. Stored-up Energies	192
165. The Spiritual Self	192
166. Conscious Continuity	193
167. The Assurance of Jesus	195
168. The Individual Consciousness	195
169. The Orderly Arrangement of Facts	195
170. The Unproved Truth	195
171. The Multitude of Witnesses	196
172. Direct Evidence	196
173. Echoes of the Past	196
174. God is Just	196
175. This is Life Eternal	197

THREE SERMONS.

I. On Prayer	207
II. Mesmerism, Spiritualism, and Hypnotism	221
III. John Stuart Mill's Religion	245

FOREWORDS ON ROBERT ELSMERE.

I HOPE an adequate reply to Robert Elsmere will be found in this book by all who think it worth while to peruse it. With Robert Elsmere's object (whatever we may think of his intellect) many of us will deeply sympathise. He seeks to reformulate Religion, and I was only one of many who welcomed this latest attempt to reconstruct a working Christianity out of the ashes of exploded sects and sleepy dogmas.

In these days when the "Gospel according to Don't Know" is being preached far and wide, and people seem rather proud of being sure about nothing connected with religion in this world or the next; anyone who proposes to teach something definite will easily get a hearing, especially if he is understood to have mastered and discarded the various current religions and philosophies.

Robert Elsmere is a young Oxford man presumably of some twenty or twenty-five years

ago, living in the mid-current of the neo-Anglican or ritualistic movement, which flowed side by side with the rising but only partially developed Broad Churchism of that epoch. Whilst credited with uncommon learning, intelligence, and earnestness, he seems to have had a singular faculty for keeping his eyes shut to what was going on around him, and an extraordinary inability to face facts when forced upon his notice. He is the close friend of a man—one Mr. Langham—who (Vol. i., p. 102) seems to have held Christianity “an open question”. For three years Robert listens with rapture to a certain Mr. Grey, whose enthusiasms are built up entirely outside the Christian fold, and for four years he figures as an Oxford tutor. We suppose he must, in the course of this time, have heard of the *Essays and Reviews*, if not of *Colenso on the Pentateuch*; Strauss and Renan may not have been entirely unknown to him; at all events his own friends spoke freely of Christianity as “an exquisite fairy tale, which withered at the first honest challenge of the critical sense,” and the sceptics about him, whilst treating him tenderly enough, do not seem to have had much reticence. Robert Elsmere next plunges into Holy Orders and takes a living

in the English Church, as yet apparently quite unconscious of those acknowledged difficulties about Bible Inspiration and the dogmas of the Christian faith as commonly taught, especially the Divinity of Christ, and the miracles generally,—points which now-a-days, at least, arrest the attention of almost every school-boy, and even in those days were matters of the commonest talk.

After being for some time in the Church, it suddenly occurs to Robert that, to use his own extraordinary words, it would “be well to introduce a little order into his notions of the Old Testament” ! Soon after that, he is completely floored by perusing a certain learned squire’s book called *Idols of the Market Place*. But what were the arguments in that redoubtable volume, nobody knows, since the contents of Squire Wendover’s *Idols of the Market Place* are nowhere recorded, and will forever remain wrapt in the same mystery as Father Caxton’s famous *History of Human Error*. Soon after this Robert makes the discovery that the book of Daniel is of late date, and other like common-places of liberal theology seem now to burst upon him for the first time, such as, inaccurate history in

Exodus and Numbers, rudimentary morality in Leviticus, imperfect science in Genesis, unfulfilled prophecies in the Old Testament, and discrepancies in the New. In fact, he becomes aware of a general need for redefining old standards, coupled with a general impossibility of accepting without some explanation dogmas like the Incarnation and phenomena like the miracles, all which things he conceives himself, as a clergyman, bound to hold and to teach literally. So feeling he can do this no longer, he jumps at once to the conclusion that he must give up his orders in the Church of England. And he at once proceeds to do so. He has not a word to say in answer to the *Idols of the Market Place*, he does not even make a fight for it; nor has he a word of reply to what is not improperly called "a few ragged gleanings" from the squire's equally appalling work on the *Value of Testimony*; nor can our Robert meet his own doubts about the Church dogmas as currently defined. It never occurs to him for a moment that it is possible with quite "elementary frankness" to take up each of the old dogmas, and after mastering their intent and purpose, so rehandle and restate them, as to rescue the essential truths aimed at in each. It nowhere dawns upon him that this is the

A B C of liberal theology and the special function of the Broad Churchman ; and that it is quite as sane and legitimate a policy for the Broad Church to attempt the reconstruction of the Church of England's Philosophy, as it was for the High Church to remodel its Ritual.—No. If the old statements are now seen to be defective, Robert Elsmere, the *honest man*—the man who shouts with the Philistine claque, is for doing away with all of them ; as who should say “because the Copernican system is not correct according to our present ideas, therefore, there is no truth at all in it”. Pray, what would have become of Newton and all other astronomers if, on becoming aware of the errors of Copernicus, they had set aside the substantial truths he taught?

But Robert Elsmere starts as the new broom and promises to do wonders for us. No longer hampered with flimsy and dishonest Broad Church attempts to fit the dogmas of Christianity into his new system, he sets forth to reconstruct his theory. His Gospel comes forth at last, but hampered, strange to say, with two unexpected but incurable defects. The defect of *Over-statement* and the defect of *Self-contradiction*. Exactly the defects which we might have

expected to find in a Gospel made up in a panic by a man who for years refused even to see the enemy, and the moment he sees him turns tail and flies. Robert Elsmere's over-statement and self-contradiction might have been avoided if he had taken time, or had had the brains to grasp the real Broad Church position, or perceived how to formulate the Broad Church creed as the key-note of that coming Anglican restatement which will be to the theology of the Reformation what Newton was to Copernicus.

First, in the new-born sceptical ardour of his attack on the preternatural, culminating with the naïve Elsmerian dogma "*Miracles do not happen*," Robert is evidently suffering from that return swing of the pendulum which is a mental characteristic of the age. Because there have been many false miracles and many impostors and dupes in all times—therefore now we must dismiss with contempt everything that happens "contrary to known causes, or without apparent cause" (Mr. Gladstone's definition of a miracle). But, as Professor Tait tardily admits: "Recent advances of physical science prove (on one or more occasions at least) that an 'intervention of creative power has taken place'": which constitutes what we

mean by a miracle—so even Professor Huxley has at last given up saying that miracles are *impossible*, and has fallen back on the altogether modest statement that their occurrence or non-occurrence is simply “a question of evidence,” but a Robert Elsmere rushes in with his rash over-statement where a Huxley fears to tread. “*Miracles do not happen*,” he shouts aloud to a room full of applauding artisans. There is no attempt at analysing any evidence for alleged supernatural occurrences past or present. The immense mass of reliable modern evidence that has now been so laboriously and carefully collected and sifted is simply treated contemptuously—as non-existent. “Miracles do not happen,”—you may take Robert Elsmere’s word for it. He thought they did once, but he has changed his mind now, so you must change yours—“Miracles do not happen”—*voilà !*

Second over-statement: “The miraculous Christian story rests on a tissue of mistakes”. This is another of those half truths with which the book abounds, and which amount to an almost cynical neglect of facts. Simply because a verbal inspiration and infallibility have been claimed for the Bible, which it nowhere claims for itself, its narratives are treated with a

degree of distrust by an Elsmere, which, in the case of a Mommsen or a Niebuhr, on Livy or Herodotus, would be deemed extravagant and prejudiced. Because the Gospels have been uncritically accepted, therefore everything miraculous in them is "a tissue of mistakes"—second over-statement.

The third over-statement is one with which the whole book rings: that there was nothing special about the revelation of God in Christ—that He was a good man, perhaps a uniquely great religious teacher, but that the spirit of God dwelt in Him, only as it dwells in every good man, and that the difference between any of us and Christ was a difference of degree, and not of kind, and so forth. This again, is the reactionary swing of the pendulum in face of the dogma "*Jesus Christ was identical in all points with the Almighty God*". Because that statement, like almost every other dogma of the Church, requires rehandling and resetting,—therefore the special divinity of Jesus, giving to His message a special and divine authority, must be swept away by the bald statement that "*Jesus was a mere man*". This to the true Broad Churchman is the crowning Elsmerian over-statement,

Well, then, a clean sweep has now been made of miracles as impossible ; of the Gospel narratives as a tissue of mistakes ; of Jesus Christ as in any special manner divine or authoritative ; and then —— ? Then instead of some new and orderly system rising like the structures of Comtism on the ruins of the old Religions, we come upon those amazing self-contradictions, which exhibit most glaringly the other great defect in Robert Elsmere's mind. With an amiable inconsistency which does infinite credit to Robert's heart, but sadly at the expense of his head, we find him bringing back under the thinnest of disguises every one of those obnoxious conceptions which he has so hotly denounced and dogmatically rejected. It really reminds us of nothing so much as the suicidal tactics of some modern doctors, who, after denouncing Mesmer and all his works, proceed to swallow the same phenomena under the name of "Hypnotism," or, like those scientists, who after assuring us that design in Nature is a product of "unconscious force," discover after all that "the equivalent to intention has to be imported into Nature". They will admit anything, in fact, rather than use the old word, God Almighty ! Precisely in like manner does Robert Elsmere give himself away,

intellectually committing the happy dispatch as follows: Elsmere's earnest object, as Mr. Gladstone points out, is to "expel the preternatural element" (Very Good! That was Comte's great object), but when pushed to it, he declares (vol. iii., p. 201) "*my friends, the man who addresses you believes in God (!)*" That is quite fatal, for God is the Great Preternatural dogma. Comte saw this clearly enough, and the whole strain of his philosophy is therefore bent upon destroying the conception of God. He feels, and feels rightly, that he cannot start his mechanical system of Nature until he has (to his own satisfaction) completely got rid of the Creator out of the Universe; so must every clear-headed man do who rejects the preternatural. But then, Robert Elsmere, though an excellent fellow, is essentially muddle-headed.

Again, "Miracles do not happen;" very well, but the great Miracle, real Prayer, understood as Communion between a human and Divine Spirit—"a thing without apparent cause, and contrary to known cause,"—Prayer is desperately clung to, and observe, prayer must not be a mere emotional trick, such as Comte countenanced, played off by the soul on itself—not even a blind recognition of the Unknow-

able, but it must be something addressed to the Reality behind all Phenomena (vol. iii., p. 356). It is the "*pressure of His Spirit on ours*"; it is, in fact, rank supernaturalism. Thus, after blowing the trumpet blast of denial, GOD, who is "without apparent cause," and PRAYER, which is certainly "contrary to" all causes which the scientist would call "known," are both taken back to Robert Elsmere's heart, "aye to his heart of hearts !"

But the most surprising recantation remains to be noticed. It is that in which Robert Elsmere, after having reduced Jesus Christ to a mere man, proceeds to speak of Him in language which is calculated to satisfy even orthodox believers in the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. "He is the symbol of the heavenly and the abiding." "He has spoken most audibly to us of God: He is the symbol of the Divine." He is in so many words, in fact, none other than "*Our Lord Jesus Christ*" (*sic*). So after three volumes of agonized fretting over a rupture with the Religion of Christ, as it is or may be held in the Church of England, Robert Elsmere lands himself in a position which, if he had only understood the aims and objects of the Broad Church teaching, would

have made the fretting and the rupture alike superfluous.

But, to say the truth, Robert, having begun by only half mastering his sceptic's brief, has never got up his Broad Church brief at all. The distressing consequences are, that the amiable and accomplished authoress of this popular theological Romance has unintentionally been guilty of an amazing libel and an amusing caricature in that light-hearted and almost jaunty sketch which she perpetrates of a Broad Church vicar. It is a great deal too good to pass over, and I cannot deny myself the luxury of quoting it *verbatim* :—

“Mr. Vernon was a Broad Churchman—belonged to the Church Reform movement, and thought it absolutely necessary to keep the Church going : and, by a policy of prudent silence and gradual expansion from within, to save the great plant of the establishment from falling wholesale into the hands of High Churchmen. In consequence, he was involved in endless contradictions and practical falseness of speech and action. His large church was attended by a handful of some fifty to a hundred persons. Vernon could not preach what he did believe, and would not preach more than was absolutely necessary of what he did not believe. His whole life was one long waste of power, simply from lack of an elementary frankness. He begged Elsmere to beware of any direct religious teaching ; talked in warm praise of a ‘policy of omissions,’ and in equally warm denunciation of anything like a ‘policy of attack,’ etc.”

After this we are not surprised to read that the "Broad Church has done but little"—we should be surprised to hear that it had done anything at all. The only excuse for dealing with such a description is on account of the one thing which lends it colour, viz., the unauthorized assumption that any large or increasing number of Broad Churchmen resemble Elsmere as well as the Vicar in worshipping God, whilst denying the supernatural, or reject the Divinity of Jesus in any real sense whatever, whilst addressing Him in language which implies the allegiance of the heart and the adoration of the soul.

Let us confess plainly that the Broad Churchism of such books as the *Kernel and the Husk* seems to us completely sterile and impossible. Even the *Kernel and the Husk* men do not resemble the Elsmere Broad Church vicar—they have at least the courage of their opinions, though they seem to us like Elsmere, puzzle-headed in rejecting the supernatural, whilst accepting God and God communion. But the Broad Churchman of the future will not resemble them or the Elsmerean vicar; he will stand on facts and not fancies, and his theories will hang together, and not destroy one another. He

will deal in assertions, not denials. He will appeal to history and experience. Supernaturalism always has been, is, and always will be, the secret force of all religion: there are no religious people without it. Not in the denial of the supernatural, but in its rehabilitation will lie the pith and marrow of the Religion of the Future. Spiritualism, hypnotism, occultism, past and present, if they can teach nothing else, should teach our philosophers and theologians so much as this. Not the rejection of all abnormal facts or phenomena, but what abnormal facts and phenomena to accept and what to reject, is the question for the Broad Churchman—not the denial of anything which lies at the root of any Church dogma, but how best to rescue the undying truth which that dogma aimed at, and represent it for our modern acceptance in a new, improved, and reasonable form. Not to throw up our “Holy orders” in a panic, but to justify them by patient reconstruction, prayer, and meditation—not to break up the Church of England, but to enlarge, vitalise, and reform it—not to denounce or flout its theological standards, but to understand and rehabilitate them. Such are the chief functions of the Broad Church clergy, and in their exercise, they are prepared to give the lie direct

to every characteristic of the Broad Church vicar (as he is sketched) according to Robert Elsmere. As to "prudent silence"! liberal theologians have been so wanting in prudence, as well as so outspoken, that some of them have been turned out of the Church—others persecuted, and all withheld from honour (if church promotion is honour). Their "practical falsities of speech and action" are only such as fall to the lot of all men who use the Educational, Parliamentary, Legal, or Ecclesiastical forms of the past in conducting present affairs, and serve time-bound institutions until better formulas or amended rules are agreed upon. At least, the Broad Church use words in avowed, if in non-literal senses, and with no mental reservations; as who should say I mean by "the sun rises," that it "appears to rise," and by the resurrection of the body, I mean "the immortality of the soul in such material form as shall be needful to its identity and proper functions". "His large church was attended by fifty or a hundred persons." Our Broad Church edifices are just as crammed or as empty as any other churches. "He could not preach what he did believe,"—we can, and we *do*. "He lacked elementary frankness,"—we begin with elementary frankness, defining our position distinctly as

Reformers, but not Revolutionists. We have no "direct religious teaching,"—our teaching is direct and positive. "Policy of omission"—our omissions are notorious and open. "A policy of attack denounced." Our attacks are repeated and sustained, and so effective that what we have attacked for years is fast crumbling away, and our irresistible methods are being adopted by our High Church brethren.

We are sometimes twitted with, "the Broad Church have no Party". That is our glory and our strength. PRINCIPLES, not PARTIES, should be written on the Broad Church Banner. The love of Truth belongs to no Party; the study of history is monopolised by no sect. When the truths which were advocated by Broad Church Divines twenty years ago are being ever so feebly whispered as new contributions to Theology (!) in the heart of Pusey's camp, we can well dispense with any special organisation. *Lux Mundi* preaches our Gospel for us. Why should we fight the High Church when there is treason in their own camp? Rather we would say to them, like Paul: "Ye are our Epistle"; "go on and prosper"—the very words which John Bright said to Disraeli when that wily tactician turned the Liberals out of office,

and then came in and passed their measures for them. We say to our High Church brethren, the writers of *Lux Mundi*: "You won't let us say these things; well, say them yourselves. We shall not oppose you; only, go on. Don't be afraid of superannuated criticism. We wish you could get on a little faster; but you are doing very well. If you were more brave, you could do better. Your book will probably not rank with the celebrated *Essays and Reviews* but, from the Broad Church point of view, this *Lux Mundi*, with all its half-hearted recantations and its singular attempts to get down on both sides of the fence, is a great step in the right direction." Better late than never; and, indeed, the book is not the less effective and pathetic because of the transparent alarm of the writers, who, whilst they send forth new and strange arrows, evidently feathered with the Broad Church plumes, and tipped with Broad Church steel, are persuaded that they have not been near the Broad Church camp nor borrowed their arrows from the enemy.

The High Church view of the Broad Church seems to be that they are Unitarians or Infidels thinly disguised. This is because the High know as little really about the Broad as the Low Church know about the High. Yet, oddly

enough, the High Church *animus* is not nearly so bitter against the Broad Church as it is against the Low Church ; and, whilst lamenting Broad Church latitudinarianism, the High have been known to speak and write civilly enough about the liberal free-shooters of the Anglican fold. The Broad Church, on the other hand, whilst regretting the special mediævalism which makes Ritualism un-English, and the narrow concentration of Grace almost upon a single sacrament, to which much of the gross materialism of Rome has been restored,—nevertheless view the High Church with a sort of brotherly feeling. To the enlightened Broad Churchmen, the honest and earnest Ritualist is not far from the kingdom of heaven. He stands firm, at least, for two vital principles, which the Broad Churchman who knows his businessought to be quick to recognise. The first is *Æstheticism*, which, now that the Roman bugbear is lifted, resumes its natural sway. The second is *Supernaturalism* as reflected in the mystic miracle of the Real Presence, which, now that abnormal phenomena are reacknowledged, gives voice to the mystic sense, which lies at the root of all religion. If now the High Church, instead of cooking history and falsifying experience, will boldly go on further to add to *Æstheticism* and Super-

naturalism, a little modern intelligence and love for truth : if now the Broad Church, ceasing to cringe to the sceptical scientists, with a like courage and perspicuity, will embody super-naturalism, and submit patiently to ecclesiastical order, there is really no reason why the Broad and High should not draw much closer together in heart and work than has hitherto seemed at all likely or possible. As long as the Evangelicals remain essentially unhistorical and ignorant, they must be left out in the cold. The spread of knowledge is too rapid for them to make much way, but on the other hand, we must remember that unless both High and Broad contrive to embody the emotional and inward ardour of the Evangelicals with their preachments and revival movements, their own methods, however admirable, must end in sterility and formalism.

In the following pages it will be evident that what I have aimed at is to force Broad Churchism out of that indefinite and somewhat hazy atmosphere characteristic of the early Broad Church leaders, into something like a distinct formulation of its position in the English Church, and its relation to the Christian creeds. I have made the creeds the basis of that formulation, not that Re-statement begins and ends there. Every dogma

that still has, or ever has had, power to express or control the religious aspirations of man, calls for restatement and justification, and the Broad Churchman, as an apostle of Truth and a student of History, has his work cut out for him. His path is quite clear and his trumpet need give no uncertain sound. It is the number of letters which I annually receive from young men who desire, but hesitate to enter the Christian Ministry, from perplexed clergymen of all denominations and in all parts of the world, who are groping about for a new platform as Christian teachers—which has moved me to embody in a book the words which I have spoken from time to time to my own congregation, especially during the last six months. I have no desire, nor have I any power or ambition to pose as the spokesman of any party, or even section of a party, in the English Church; my only care has been honestly to define my own position, and perhaps to help others to define theirs, and to indicate the direction (ending in the union of Science with so-called Supernaturalism) in which I believe religious thought and opinion in the establishment must travel for the next hundred years at least,—if the Church of England is to be in any true sense the National Church of the present, or the Catholic Church of the Future.

I.

ARE THE BROAD CHURCH DISHONEST ?

“NO !”

I.

1. Men of intelligence do not attend Church. 2. The Spirit of Religion survives. 3. The feeling is without reason—the form incongruous. 4. An Intellectual Reform required. 5. The Broad Church. 6. The Broad Church Method. 7. What was, what is, what is no longer true. 8. Tenderness with the Past. 9. The Broad Church claim Jesus. 10. And also St. Paul. 11. And also Luther. 12. Reform, not Revolt. 13. What Revolution has cost. 14. The Mechanism of Reform. 15. The Thirty-nine Articles are Broad Church. 16. What has been accomplished. 17. Reform possible. 18. An Honest method. 19. Diversities of Form, the same Spirit. 20. The Witness of Law and Politics. 21. The Broad Church Defence threefold. 22. Fealty to Terms of Subscription. 23. Fealty to Church Law impossible. 24. Fealty to Administration strictly observed. 25. Fealty to Truth—The Broad Church triumph—What to do with Dogma. 26. Papal infallibility—True—No longer true. 27. Gathering up the Fragments—Bidding the Dead Letter Live.



I.

ARE THE BROAD CHURCH DISHONEST? “NO!”

1. HERE are two facts : Intelligent men constantly refuse to take Holy Orders. Intelligent men constantly refuse to attend church. The reasons are obvious and related. They stare one in the face and they dovetail. Intelligent men won't sit in the pew because intelligent men won't stand in the pulpit. “I will not take Holy Orders,” says the clever, conscientious, even religious-minded man, “because the formularies as they stand do not express my religious convictions. I doubt my power of being able to bring them into any kind of harmony with these convictions. If I could, I doubt whether I should be allowed to do so in the Church of England ; meanwhile, I should have to say what I don't believe, and therefore I won't go into the Church.” “I don't sit in the pew,” says the intelligent layman, “because what I hear in Church is obsolete, trivial—often to my mind senseless ; the pulpit is frequently occupied by a man who would not get sixpence a day in any other profession, and whom no one would think of listening to out of church, although, by the way, he often talks more sense on his own hearthrug than in the pulpit ;

the prayers sound, some of them, antiquated and exaggerated, the expression of doctrines unreal or unintelligible; the Bible reading is ill-chosen or inaudible; therefore, on the whole, I don't go to church."

2. If, now, some men still go to church, it is in spite of the obsolete doctrine and the (thank God, with exceptions) incompetent clergy. The greatest tribute to the necessity of religion is, that it survives its outworn forms; the greatest proof of the essential truth of Christianity is, that in spite of the twaddle talked every Sunday throughout England in the name of Christ, Christianity is still alive. Pithily said the old verger, "I've been listening to sermons twice every Sunday for nigh forty year come Michaelmas, and, thank God, I'm a Christian still". Alas! the faith of all sermon-hearers is not so robust.

3. Will intellect and eloquence ever return to the pulpits of the Church of England? Will intelligent men ever to any noticeable extent re-occupy her pews? That will entirely depend upon whether the Liberal or Broad Church party can reorganize the religious thought of the Church as fearlessly and successfully as the Low Church reorganized its emotional piety and the High Church reorganized its sacramental and dramatic ritual. It is the thought of the age far more than the feeling or the taste of the age that is alienated from the Church. Feeling is still there, and form is still there—an occasional orator, like Liddon, or the Bishop of Peterborough, is the result—

but both feeling and form are in danger of paralysis, because Church feeling is without intelligence, and Church form is without congruity to the age.

4. The Low Church have done well, but they have had their day ; they have leavened the laity. The High Church have done well ; they have made religion fashionable, but they have not leavened the laity. Pusey never got hold of the masses like Wesley. The reason of that is that Puseyism was Italian, Wesleyanism was English ; but neither was intellectual, and the reform now needed in the Church is essentially an *intellectual* reform. In this respect the age is more like the age of Constantine and Athanasius than the age of Luther and Henry VIII. We want a form of sound words which will ring true in nineteenth-century ears. The creeds and articles are now "like sweet bells jangled out of tune". Neither Low Church nor High Church have any remedy to propose for this. When the Low Church are asked what's to be done, they quote texts ; when the High Church are asked for a remedy, they say the Catechism or mutter the Mass. But this won't do for ever. That is why the Broad Church who can supply a new intellectual basis should not be slow to come in at this crisis and make their contribution to the National Church. Whether under the strain of this reform the Anglican Church as such will go to pieces, as the Jewish Church went to pieces before Christianity, depends upon whether the Church knows or does not know in this her day the things which belong to her peace ; but nothing short of a frank and radical

re-formulation of doctrine—at least as radical as the English Reformation—is required ; and neither High Church (witness the *Lux Mundi* apologetics !) nor the Evangelical Prophets (witness Mr. Spurgeon on the “Apostasy of these Latter Days”) seem to be alive to that obvious fact. They hear the shouting of the foe, and they bury their heads deeper in the sand ; but in polemics the ostrich policy never answers. And now to the point, or rather the four points. (a) What are the Broad Church ? (b) What is their method ? (c) Is that method possible ? (d) Is that method honest ? Answer these questions straightforwardly, and not after the fashion of *Lux Mundi*, and a new Reformation will have dawned. Intellect will no longer shun the church pulpit. Thinking men will no longer shun the church pew.

5. (a) *What are the Broad Church ?* I will give a descriptive analysis rather than a definition of Broad Churchism. Firstly : The Broad Church are those who love the High Church, because they perceive that High Churchism bears witness to the sacramental character of forms and ceremonies. We need such outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual graces. The Broad Church are those who love the Low Church, because they perceive that Low Churchism bears witness to spiritual freedom. The soul must have this too ; it will not be bound by that it uses ; we need forms and ceremonies ; we need spiritual freedom. The High Church would cast out the Low Church, and the Low Church the High, and both would cast out the Broad ; but the Broad desires to

retain both,—it is *Comprehensive*. Secondly: The Broad Church feels the need of bringing the praying and the preaching of the Anglican Church into harmony with nineteenth-century thought and feeling. It does not believe that the theology of Constantine in the fourth century was any more final than the settlement of Henry VIII. in the sixteenth century. It desires to bring doctrine to the test of living thought, re-stating its substance in terms of present knowledge,—it is *Radical*. Thirdly: It uses Dogmatic Theology as a basis of Action, and the Formularies of the National Church as a Mechanism of Ritual,—it is *Conservative*. The three descriptive adjectives of the Broad Church are these—*Comprehensive, Radical, Conservative*.

6. (b) *What is the Broad Church Method?*—Reform from within. There are two ways of reforming a system or a person. You can go outside and attack—that means Revolution, it is the Destructive Method. It tramples upon good and bad together, like the silly Christian missionary who began the conversion of the Mohammedan by sitting on the Koran. The other way is to mould and modify from within, getting gradually rid of the false or the obsolete, and developing new life around all such true and living germs as can be found in every dogma and in every creed. That is Reform—it is the Constructive Method; it is the way of Life; it is the Secret of Nature. It is suitable to religion because religion is a living, growing thing. Religion is not mechanical but organic. It is not like a building which can be patched and

altered and tinkered up at will ; it must grow ; it must live or die, but whilst it lives it must grow, and growing change. Learn a parable from the acorn : You plant it, the husk rots slowly, you don't strip it off, it surrounds and protects the new living germ to the last, and only sinks into the mould when its work is done. Every dogmatic expression, every form or ceremony becomes even as the husk of the acorn in time ; but you must not strip it off too soon ; it is there to protect the living germ of the new oak ; it will drop away of itself, it has its use ; let it alone.

7. Over every creed and formulary is written this motto : "*It was true—It is true—It is no longer true,*" which being interpreted is, "Once such and such a dogma—The Trinity, or the Incarnation, a verbally Inspired Bible, an Infallible Church—once such dogmas were the best attainable expressions of certain truths". "*It was true.*" Now we can discern the essential truth that lies at the root of each one of the old puzzling statements ; that essential something is destined to last on in a changed form—transformed—"*It is true*". But we may find better ways of expressing it—the form of sound words once so helpful and adequate is now obsolete or seen to be erroneous, as who should say "the sun rises," a perfectly correct statement of what appears to take place—but—"but it is no longer true".

8. The true reformer is tender with the Past, patient with Dogma, respectful to Forms. He knows their value. The greatest reformers have always tried to

retain and use what they found. They have usually been defeated and driven into opposition, but resistance to reform from within has compelled revolution or attack from without. Revolution has brought disaster, and the destruction of much that was valuable, and which might have been kept, and has got to be painfully brought back.

9. The policy of the Broad Church, the policy of reform from within, is called dishonest, but it was nevertheless the policy of Jesus. He was the greatest spiritual Reformer whom the world had ever seen: but He used the synagogue—it was “His custom” to go there on the Sabbath. He did not approve of everything there, but He used what He found. He said: Moses says this, but I tell you something different, yet I come not to destroy but to fulfil. He foretold the results of putting the new wine into the old bottles, but He poured it in Himself till they burst. He used the old rites with new meanings. To Nicodemus, His view of baptism seemed quite non-natural and so strained that that ruler of the Jews could not understand it.

10. Paul was also for carrying reform from within. He did not believe in circumcision, but he circumcised Timothy; nor in meats offered to idols, but he was willing to abstain; nor in vows, but he shaved his head, “having a vow at Cenchrea”; and so eager was he not to break with the old established Church of his brethren that he used up the whole of the old sacrificial language until the religion of Christ through

his epistles became quite intolerably weighted with the theology of the Jewish shambles, and through him Christianity is so weighted down to the present day.

11. Luther tried hard to reform from within. He would have given worlds not to break with the Pope. He stretched many a point; he did not even quite destroy Transubstantiation, he called it Consubstantiation; he was even for retaining the externals of the Mass, and half the old ceremonies intact. "Alter as little as possible the externals of religion," was his constant advice, until the situation became desperate. The policy of the Broad Church is therefore of *Divine authority*, for it is the policy of Jesus,—and of *historical precedent*, for it is the policy of Paul, Luther, Savonarola, and many others.

12. And why are we thus Conservative? Because Reformation is better than Revolution. We ought to learn this much from the past, for surely the evils of Revolution have been written on the page of history in characters of blood and fire for our instruction. Christianity became a Revolution when the world put it in opposition—and the consequence? Art, Letters, and Science perished for centuries; slowly something was recovered, Letters revived, Art was rediscovered, but a good deal was lost for ever. We must remember that those old books of magic were also burnt (Acts xix. 19), and thus accumulations of occult Science were destroyed as well as the Greek statues and the classic MSS.

13. The Luther movement became a Revolution ; England separated from Rome, because Rome would not allow a Reform from within—the consequences? External decencies of worship trampled upon, numberless aids to religion, helps, manuals, organisations for charity ruthlessly swept away, stained-glass smashed, Gothic treasures ruined, the belief in a Divine Presence with the Church enfeebled, half-killed by blows dealt at the Supernatural, which is, fence as we will, the life of Religion in all its various forms ; and only just now are we slowly bringing back Art to the Sanctuary, and the sense of supernatural Principalities and Powers to the world. The High Church stands for Order and Art ; and Modern Spiritualism in its many and mixed forms bears witness, cloudy but constant, to the Supernatural ; but the old Church in the midst of all its corruption conserved both Art and Spiritualism. It might have done without a Revolution, had it faced the strain of Reform from within, mended its Morals, restated its Dogmas, and written its Supernaturalism up to date ; but it would not or it could not ; at any rate it did not, and one-half of Roman Catholicism was swept away. The Broad Church teachers see all this. For them history has not been written in vain.

14. The principle of Reform from within is immense and far reaching ; that is why the Broad Church assume dogmatic Christianity as a Basis, and the formularies of the National Church as a Mechanism, and propose to mould the one and to modify the other, as Dogmas and Formularies have been moulded and modified before, until the Church prayers and the

Church preaching get into living touch with nineteenth-century thought and feeling.

15. (c) *Can it be done?*—Is it possible? To the Church of the Reformation everything is possible. Colani said years ago at Strasburg: “Protestantism is not the last note of the Reformed Church, it is the first note—it shows the direction in which the Church intends to travel”. Articles IX. and XXXIV. (*vide* Thirty-Nine Articles) are the two famous Broad Church Articles, since they provide for every conceivable kind of reform from within. Article IX. proclaims that all churches up to the Reformation had erred—so why not all churches after it?—and Article XXXIV. declares that national churches have power to alter or ordain Rites and Ceremonies; and therefore Doctrines, for what are Rites but embodied Doctrines (at least according to the Ritualists)? At all events the Church of the Reformation dealt with both Doctrine and Ritual once, and is capable of dealing with both again.

16. But why beat about the bush, when this possibility of internal reform is no longer a dream but an accomplished fact, and within the memory of man, too. In my time the Gunpowder Plot and Charles the Martyr services have been dropped out of the Prayer-book. The service commemorative of the Restoration of Charles II. has also disappeared. A few years ago a revised translation of the Bible was authorised by the bishops, striking a death-blow at that idolatry of the English letter at one time in

favour with the Bible Christian. In 1865, what Dean Stanley used to call a rag-and-tatter subscription for the clergy was substituted for the old hard-and-fast document. We, the clergy of the Anglican Church, have now a liberty in doctrine and ritual unknown to any other Church in Christendom. Is it too much to expect that a Church that can do so much out of deference to modern opinions, and carry so rapidly such reforms from within, will some day follow Dr. Hussey's suggestion (*Bampton Lectures on Sunday*) and give us simple alternative forms for the Sacraments—may I add, an expurgated Bible, selected Psalms, one Creedal statement, simpler and briefer, additional qualifying and liberating rubrics, sanctioning a more elastic conduct of the services, and, lastly, a total repeal of the Act of Uniformity, an oppressive document unknown to the early Church, and already, under the Act of 1865, become almost a dead letter.

17. The answer to this third question, Is reform inside the Church of England possible? amounts simply to this. Such reform is provided for by two of the Thirty-nine Articles, and it is already an accomplished fact in half-a-dozen crucial cases. Let us go on and prosper.

18. (*d.*) And lastly, *Is the method of the Broad Church honest?*—a question which presses heavily on good Mr. Spurgeon, who thinks us all “*villains*”; but then that excellent man admits that he “*does not understand Broad Church ethics*”. Why, of course not; what would his sheep say if he did? To stay

in a Church which you see needs reform, to use formularies and start with statements of doctrine which you cannot agree with as they stand, but desire to amend—is this honest? Well, every living party in the Church has been charged with dishonesty just so long as it was a *reforming* party. The Low Church were called dishonest because they leaned to Nonconformity and its irregular ways; but the Low Church got itself accepted, and has long since been dubbed orthodox. Indeed, Lord Palmerston, under Lord Shaftesbury's dictation, would have nothing but Low Church bishops. The High Church was called dishonest because it leaned towards Rome, but that, too, got itself accepted, and now it is better to be rather High Church than otherwise (whether Gladstone or Salisbury be in power) if you want to be a bishop; and so the Broad Church, who are the latest reformers, are naturally denounced as dishonest because they want to remould the doctrine and the ritual of the Church into accord with nineteenth-century thought and feeling.

19. When people attack the Broad Church with—“Do you believe the doctrines of the Church? Do you approve of the formularies of the Church?” it is sufficient answer to say: The Church of England Doctrine is believed, and the Church Liturgy is used and preached in the High and Low Churches, but it does not sound quite the same in both, and it certainly does not look at all the same; why expect more from the Broad Church? We believe and preach the doctrines and we use the forms in our

way, they in theirs. Condemn us all, or acquit us all; we are all guilty, or we are all innocent. The Low Church had at one time such a contempt for ecclesiastical form that they could hardly abide the bishops, or bear the trammels of the liturgy at all. Wesley, who died a clergyman of the Church of England, arrogated to himself Episcopal functions; and the Lady Huntingdon connection fairly stepped across the border: yet Lady Huntingdon's first chaplain and trustee, Dr. Thomas Haweis (my grandfather), lived and died Rector of Aldwinkle in the Church of England. The High Church openly detest the word Protestant, and denounce the Reformation as a curse. Their doctrine of the Real Presence in the Sacraments is closely akin to the gross materialism of the Mass, but the High Church have stood their ground as honest men for a' that. The Broad Church call for Re-statement. They are for dropping what is obsolete, but not all at once. They would go on printing the prayer-book with *alternative forms and additions*. They are for re-covering and re-setting the essential truth which lies at the bottom of every dogma, correlating the new knowledge with current religious thought, and re-adapting the Church functions to the needs and the intellectual, social, and æsthetic instincts of the age; and the Broad Church presume to call themselves honest men for a' that.

20. You don't call your M.P.'s, Mr. John Morley or Mr. Bryce, dishonest, because they admire Republican opinions, and yet take the oath of allegiance to Her Majesty. People have almost left off calling

Mr. Parnell dishonest because he, like many others, continues to be an M.P. and a Home Ruler as well. Our judges are not thought dishonest because they take the oaths, and are content to preside over a mass of laws, some obsolete, some contradictory, some sorely in need of re-statement, and not a few which call for interpretation in strained and non-natural senses. But what are the difficulties of the British Constitution, and what is the confused and heterogeneous mass of the English law—what is the mixed position of the M.P. or the judge compared to the confusion, the jumble of things old and new in religion with which the clergyman of the Church of England has got to deal? And what should he do under the circumstances? Why should his principle be other than that which governs judge or M.P.? Put the question, “what becomes of the country if the House never passes a Reform Bill (*reform from within*); what becomes of justice if there is never a Law Amendment Act, never an attempt to reconcile law and equity, and write law up to date (*all reforms from within*)?” And what becomes of the religion of the National Church if every attempt to reform, restate, and write up to date is burked, is denounced as treachery and dishonour? (*again reform from within*).

21. We declare then that the Broad Church clergy, adopting the method of Jesus, and maintaining historic continuity with St. Paul and Luther, are justified in stopping where they are; in pleading for, and in working for, and in hoping for Reform instead

of Revolution; and they may fairly plead the example of Jesus the Master, Paul the disciple, and Luther the monk, and charge those with ignorance who accuse them of dishonesty. In fact, the Broad Church clergyman has only to satisfy himself on three points, and the argument for his defence against all the Robert Elsmeres, Stopford Brookes, and Voyseys, and even Spurgeons, is practically closed : —(e) He owes fealty to the terms of Subscription, (f) To the Administration, (g) To the essential Truths underlying the Dogmas of the Church.

22. (e) *Fealty to the Terms of Subscription.*—The Broad Church clergyman is often asked : “Does not your teaching violate the terms of your clerical Subscription? You undertook to believe and teach certain Doctrines which you now call in question.” The answer to this is brief. The old Subscription was much more hard and fast, binding us, the clergy, to the Thirty-nine Articles and other things. All that is over; the burden is lifted, we are free. The relaxed Subscription of 1865 is, as the late Dean of Westminster pointed out, a mere “rag and tatter of Subscription”. It simply binds us to an administrative Assent, and to belief in a Fact which, as we shall see, is of no doctrinal importance whatever. (The form is quoted in the footnote.*) Is it possible to conceive of anything more free and flimsy than this?

* “I assent to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, and to the Book of Common Prayer, and to the ordering of bishops, priests, and deacons. I believe the doctrine of the United Church of England and Ireland, as there set forth, to be agreeable to the word of God. I will use the form in the same book prescribed,” etc.

Now to *assent* to a formulary is not to give adherence of belief to all its statements any more than an M.P.'s assent to the British Constitution implies his agreement with all its parts. We do not even profess a *belief in any doctrine or doctrines whatever*; we merely declare that we believe the doctrines of the Church *are agreeable to the Word of God*. By the *Word of God* most clergy and laity would, I suppose, understand *the Bible*. Well, it is a very light matter to believe that the doctrines of the Church can be proved by Scripture texts if that is all that is wanted, since every Christian sect in and outside the Church can do as much as that—for notoriously all claim Scripture texts in favour of their peculiar tenets, orthodox and unorthodox. After Bishop Harold Browne, the present (1890) Bishop of Winchester, "on the Thirty-nine Articles," or Pearson "on the Creed," it is difficult to conceive of any theological proposition that could not be proved to be *agreeable to the Word of God*, with a little "vigour and rigour," such as is commonly practised by professional theologians when they have some Dogma to prove. Fealty to such a Subscription is, indeed, a simple matter, and the Subscription is truly, a mere "rag and tatter Subscription".

23. (f) *Fealty to the Administration.* And here the Broad Church clergy compare very favourably with their High Church brethren, who are always worrying their bishops about other "rags and tatters". The Ritualists obey their bishops so long as their bishops obey them, but what a life they led Arch-

bishop Tait! The Broad Church always obey their bishops. "You don't keep the law of the Church" is a common, but an idle taunt; the reply is: "Of course we don't—who does?" Not the Low Church, few of whom read the morning and evening prayer through daily, or say, "Peace be to this house" on visiting the sick, or inquire into the character of all who present themselves for the Sacrament at the altar rails, as they are bound to do by the Rubric. Even the High Church do not dare to do this: if they did they would soon be had up for libel. How many clergymen now omit the Athanasian Creed, or refuse to read the Communion service; how many illegally curtail the church services in all sorts of ways and don't keep the saints' days; how often is the long exhortation to attend the Lord's Supper read; how seldom is the denunciatory one ever heard, although in many churches the number of communicants is notoriously small? All parties, therefore, freely and unrebukedly neglect or break the law of the Church. Fealty to that is no longer possible.

24. The rule, therefore, must now be—*Fealty to the Administration*. Not what is illegal, but what is enforced or authoritatively enjoined in each particular case—that we are bound to obey—and only *that*. In a word we *bow to the administration* of the Church. If we can do this conscientiously, we, as Broad Church clergy, remain in the Church; if we cannot, we must go. But, in all cases, we lay the *onus* of turning us out upon the Administration; we are not

going out as long as we are allowed to work for Church Reform from *within*. If we are tolerated, why the High and the Low are no more and no less, and we claim our common liberties along with them. And we propose to stay in the Church and work out our policy till the times change and we come into power, even as they have stayed in and successfully worked out theirs, until they came into power and got themselves generally accepted. And our time is not far off now.

25. (*g*) But when we come to *Faalty to Truth*, the Broad Church can triumph easily over both High and Low. The High Church do not like the Low Church Dogma, and the Low Church object to the High ritual and Dogma; but the Broad Church declare, with one far-reaching and sweeping acceptance, the value and necessity of holding tight every Dogma that the Church has ever taught. They are, indeed, for turning it out of dead Dogma into living Doctrine. They wrestle with it as Jacob wrestled with the angel. They will know its name and nature, nor will they let it depart until it has yielded up its secret and blessed them. They are for re-stating—in other words, rescuing and resetting—the Truth which any special Dogma once held; Truth which the Dogma is now in danger of wounding, even as the angel touched the sinew of the Patriarch's thigh, and it shrank. But nothing in the way of Dogma comes amiss to the Broad Church; they are positively hungry for it. They delight in it; they use it as a very Siloam pool of suggestion and healing. Dogma

is to them the only secure basis upon which every new and living Truth has to be built up. At worst, Dogma is but as an over-faithful, weather-beaten sentinel, from whose iron and icy grip some time-worn treasure has to be delivered.

26. Give a Broad Churchman even the Dogma of the Infallibility of the Pope, and he will be delighted to handle it sympathetically and tenderly. He will tell you that this apparently monstrous notion was as nearly true as any could be, when the most enlightened Church in Christendom was the Roman Church, and the Pope in Council, as its Representative, summed up the verdict of the most enlightened Christian Conscience. The ideal verdict of the enlightened Christian Conscience in every age is the nearest approach to Infallibility we shall ever get on this earth, and the assumption and widely undisputed assumption of that glory once belonged to Rome; the Dogma *was true*. *It is true* (in so far as it serves to remind us of an almost self-evident truth).—*It is no longer true*.

27. And if the Broad Churchman can do so much, and can glory in doing so much for an exploded Roman dogma, gathering up the fragments that nothing be lost, it will be a light thing for him to take up the dogmas of the Reformed Church, Inspiration of the Bible, Justification by faith, Sacramental Grace, Original Sin, Eternal Punishment, the Trinity, and the Divinity of the Lord Jesus, and show his fealty to the essential Truths which lie embedded

in every one of these Dogmas. When this is done, and it becomes perfectly clear to me, that this can be done, and honestly done, in the Church of England,—intelligent men will no longer refuse to take Holy Orders, and intelligent men will no longer refuse to attend Church. Let us now face the main positions of the creeds and see how the Broad Church method in its latest development works out. You will observe that the remainder of this book is entirely built upon the Dogmas of the Christian Creeds.



II.

ARE THE CREEDS CREDIBLE?

“*YES* AND *NO!*”

II.

28. Yes or No—A Forensic Device—Yes and No. 29. The Creeds—Spirit and Form. 30. Forms of Sound Words—The Apostle's Creed. 31. The Nicene Creed—Arius and Athanasius. 32. The Athanasian Creed—Athanasius and Anastasius. 33. Credibility, not Credulity. 34. Religious Faith and Intellectual Belief. 35. The Gospel appeals to Credibility, not to Credulity. 36. The Reformers appeal to Credibility, not Credulity. 37. The Doctrine of the Unity in the Athanasian Creed and the Articles. 38. In the Essence and the Spirit.



II.

ARE THE CREEDS CREDIBLE?

“*YES AND NO!*”

28. Are the creeds credible? *Yes or no!* All questions cannot be answered by yes or no, and this is one. A common old Bailey device is to get a nervous witness in the box and say: “Now Sir—do you mean that *such* and *such* are your opinions or that you implied *so* and *so* by *such* and *such* words—yes or *no!*” * “Well but—really—that’s not quite —” stammers the witness. “*Yes or no!*” roars the examining counsel. “Now, sir, be careful and stick to the point—answer me *yes or no!*” and the witness dumb-founded, naturally wriggles, prevaricates or perjures himself in his perplexity. “Is the British Constitution a good thing?” *Yes or no?* No such answer is admissible. The British Constitution is a very mixed affair. It is good here, and we are all proud of it; it is bad there, and we desire to amend

* I regret to see this unworthy device resorted to by a respectable writer like the author of *The Incarnation as the Basis of Dogma in Lux Mundi*. He writes, “the Incarnation is either a fact or a fiction. If it is not true it is false. Is He God or is He not?” This very question is faced in our section following p. 77 “*Was Jesus God Incarnate: YES and No*”.

it. The answer should be not *yes* or *no*, but *yes and no*. Flippant people in like manner come to the clergy with "Is the Bible true—*yes* or *no*?" And the right answer is again *yes and no*. The Bible contains the record of those divine precepts and those eternal truths which bind human society, dominate the ages, and purify the world. So far it is true, *yes*; but the Bible being a progressive revelation records imperfect stages, and being a record composed by men, contains inaccurate science, and unreliable history, and rudimentary, often even contradictory morality. So the real answer to "Is the Bible true?" is *yes and no*.

29. And now to the creeds of the Church. Are they true? The creeds are so many attempts to state certain things which are undoubtedly true. but whilst the spirit of each creedal clause, that which its expression or dogma aims at, may be true, the letter or the form of expression of any creedal clause may be imperfect or untrue. For instance take the creedal clause: "*I believe in the resurrection of the body*". The essence or *spirit* of that clause is a belief in the survival of the soul under fitting conditions of self manifestation or even incarnation. That is the essence which gave the words "*I believe in the resurrection of the body*," their value and that is true; but the sort of *physical resurrection*, which those who wrote these words dreamed of, and such as Giotto and Luca Signorelli painted,—the rising of the bodies out of the coffins whilst an angel blew a horn, that is not true. And so the answer in

this and some other cases concerning the creeds, to the question are their statements true, is not "*yes* or *no*," but "*yes* and *no*".

30. What are the creeds? The creeds may be described as a form of sound words defining Christian Doctrine as understood at the time. The nucleus of the Christian creed is found in the last chapter of Matthew: "*Go ye and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;*" those written words may date about 85 A.D. The Apostle's creed, or the substance of it, was used by Irenæus about 150 A.D. It existed probably much earlier. It was traditionally attributed to the Apostles by Tertullian. Concerning some such form of sound words Irenæus the disciple of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna (who was *himself* a disciple of St. John), writes, "the Church dispersed throughout the whole world received this creed from the Apostles".

31. The Nicene creed next emerges 325 A.D. It was thought necessary to define more precisely several matters in dispute, especially questions concerning the exact nature of Christ's Divinity, and His relation to the Father and the Holy Ghost, who were now for the first time being conceived of as separate "Persons". Theophilus, of Antioch, had invented the word Trinity, towards the close of the second century, and as Mosheim truly says, "the Church has had very little reason to be grateful to him for his discovery". So also speaks the

wise and acute Dean Milman: "Alas! that the subtlety and exquisite distinctness of the Greek language should ever have been applied to religious opinions of oriental origin". Still no doubt the Church was in a great state of confusion; on the one hand the Jewish converts, with their strong monotheistic instinct not to identify any human or visible form, however, exalted with the one God, made them averse to calling Jesus anything more than a Son of God, or at most the "Messiah," or a Divinely appointed National Deliverer; on the other hand the Gentile converts, accustomed to all sorts of human gods, who it seems frequently came down from Olympus and walked and talked with men, naturally could not bear that their beloved Jesus should be thought of lower dignity than the Jupiter, Mars, or Apollo, whom they had formerly worshipped, and so the Gentile or Pauline Christians insisted upon it that Jesus was quite a true God, as true, and indeed truer, than any of the Gods of the nations. But, then again, some shrank from saying he was identical with the Invisible and Eternal Great God Almighty. Perhaps, they speculated, he was an emanation, created and sent forth (*sic* Arius); not one who had *always* been (*sic* Athanasius), but one who began to be a true God, no doubt, sharing deity with the Almighty, yet nevertheless one who *had a beginning*, and therefore along with all his human attributes might have an end. But this again in the sensitive and irritable ears of 4th century Church doctors seemed like saying there were *two* Gods, and so the horror of slipping back into Polytheism

and rank idolatry, which so many had suffered martyrdom to escape from, gave exceeding point and sweetness to the doctrine of Athanasius *that there never was but one God, and that Christ began not to be but was merely the Human in God which had always been co-eval and co-eternal, and one with God Almighty, although manifested once in time.* The fury with which these questions were debated, even in the low pot-houses, baths, and market places throughout the East, is something inconceivable. The whole Christian community was convulsed. The Emperor's personal attention was directed to the scandal. It was quite intolerable that mobs shouting for the *Homoiousion* or that Christ was only of a *like* nature with God, should parade the streets of Alexandria, breaking the heads of other mobs who were shouting for the *Homøousion*, or that Christ was of the *same* nature with God. Constantine determined to put a stop to this. He would have uniformity of belief one way or the other, he did not much care which, although personally inclined to Arius. But the Church had become necessary to the Empire, and internal peace was necessary to the efficiency of the Church. Constantine was shrewd enough to see this. The Council of Nicæa met on the shores of the Ascanian lake in Bithynia. Three hundred and eighteen Bishops came from all parts of Christendom. There were ninety-one Inns in those days between Bordeaux and Nicæa. The royal posts were placed at the disposal of the Holy men, and at last in open Council; the Veteran ARIUS, aged sixty-five, who

stood for the *Homoiousios*, confronted the novice ATHANASIUS, aged twenty-five, who stood for the *Homoousios*, and the victory remaining by a narrow majority with ATHANASIUS, the creed of Nicæa emphasising his doctrine became the creed of Christendom.

32. The “Athanasian (so called) creed” remains to be dealt with. It was called after ATHANASIUS, but was certainly never written by him. Some attribute it to HILARY, Bishop of Arles in the 5th Century—but perhaps the best account of it is, that it was composed by one VICTRICIUS, an obscure Bishop of Gaul in the 4th century, who had been accused of being unsound on the Trinitarian dogma, and who had recited this hard and fast confession in the presence of Bishop *Anastasius*; the description of this Trinitarian Confession made before ANASTASIUS soon became (probably through the ignorance and blundering of copyists) “The creed of ST. ATHANASIUS”—and so the ‘creed’ passed with some difficulty into several of the church liturgies. It is thus seen to be of no great authority, as no one really knows who wrote it, and we perhaps need not trouble ourselves further with its dubious history, and still more dubious theology. It is interesting as an arrogant blast of primitive polemics, and may still be heard echoing like a discordant war-cry of the past in some of our churches. Now we have answered briefly the great question, “*What are the Creeds?*”

33. Let us now ask what do the creeds aim at?

Answer Credibility not Credulity. This is a point almost completely ignored by modern apologists, *Lux Mundi* people, and such like elaborate and obsolete controversialists. The creeds ruled once in their present form, not because they made demands upon belief, but because they seemed for the time being the most credible of all things. If they have ceased to commend themselves to intelligent people, it is simply because the form of words, credible once, as being in harmony with a past age and a past method of thought—is unsuited to our own age and our present methods of thought—but we may take it as an axiom that the *intention* of all creeds is the same—they *intend* to sound credible—they are popular in proportion as they are seen to be intelligible and definitely expressed. This is the very opposite theory to the one commonly forced upon us by our religious teachers. “It is a virtue to profess what it is difficult to believe, and perhaps impossible to understand”—that is preached every Sunday, and that is a most disheartening and pernicious error. In other words religious truth is not the bread of life and the water of life, and the wine of consolation—but nasty physic—you may gild the pill—but a pill it is, you may disguise the wretched powder in jam, but a nauseous drug it remains—you may drench the stuff with syrup, but you must taste a little anyhow, and gulp it down as best you can.

34. All this is absolutely pernicious teaching, it makes men infidels, it keeps men infidels. Separate once for all *between* RELIGIOUS FAITH and INTELLEC-

TUAL BELIEF. There is that in the creeds which was intended to appeal to both, but FAITH is one thing, BELIEF is another. The creeds contain central ideas or essences which invite the *Faith* or loving trust of the heart no doubt—that is their *spirit*—but the *letter* of the creeds is simply a proposition about truth addressed to the head—the letter aims at the intellect not the heart. You believe simply what sounds believable ; you may have belief without Faith, for there may be nothing in what you believe calculated to call forth your loving trust—but you can't have Faith without Belief—your Faith includes some sort of Belief. That is why I define Faith as “*a loving trust founded on a reasonable belief*”. What we have a right to demand of our creeds is that they should explain or define intelligibly or credibly the objects of our Faith or loving trust. Religion, intellectually apprehended, passes up through *reasonable* belief into *loving trust*. If teachers of religion cannot make us feel this through the creeds, or show us why the creeds once seemed reasonable, and how they may be re-handled so as to seem reasonable again—they may up give preaching—writing their *Lux Mundis*—or whining feebly about the scepticism of the age, for all such well meaning efforts, in spite of a certain flavour of liberalism, ignore the A B C of the great modern controversy between the Church and the world, the pith of which is summed up in these words : “*Creeds never were and never ought to be an appeal to credulity, but always an appeal to credibility*”. No teacher that fails to grasp this cardinal point is of very much use in the 19th century. He may be learned—he may be

earnest and devout—he may be a very good school-master, a very accurate scholar, and a very dull writer—but with all these weighty qualities he is obsolete. Professor Jowett noticed long ago with a little gentle cynicism all his own, how all the resources and ingenuity of learning might be used to prop up a system of thought and opinions which was doomed to decay because not true.

35. Let no man henceforth plague himself to swallow the Incredible, or believe the Impossible in the name of Religion, least of all in the name of Christ's Religion. The Prince of the devils has been persuading Christians to do this a great deal too long—and from his point of view with excellent results—for the spread of Infidelity has been the immediate consequence. "But can we understand everything?" Certainly not. There is mystery everywhere—granted; there are difficulties and doubts and apparent contradictions in the universe of mind and matter—granted; but when it comes to religious belief depend upon it, nothing is vital, nothing is strong, nothing is holy until it has been put into some form in which, though mysterious and baffling, and possibly but half explained, it seems, nevertheless, likely, or at least credible. It is, for instance, not easy to understand the existence of disembodied intelligences, but a good many considerations make that belief reasonable. "I believe in ministering spirits," is far from being an appeal to credulity, it is an appeal to credibility. The sooner we get out of credulity in religion into credibility, the sooner we

get reasons which sound and seem reasonable, the sooner he shall have a Faith which, like that of St. Paul, will "*commend itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God*". Observe the method of the divine teacher. The Gospel which Jesus preached was believed not because the people had to gasp and strain and do violence to their intelligence over its propositions, but because it was so simple and convincing. *If ye love Me, keep My Commandments.* Personal allegiance to Jesus was so easy; He was irresistibly attractive. "*Ye believe in God, believe also in me—believe for the very work's sake.*" The evidences that His word and work were good and divine were so plain that he who ran might read. The orthodox dogmatists of the Talmud, with their hair-splitting distinctions and subtleties, were in a moment out of court before the simplicity which was in Jesus. "*See ye,*" they said, "*how we prevail nothing—the whole world is gone after Him,*" and "*the people were very attentive to hear Him,*" because all he said, with the exception of here and there a paradox with a purpose, seemed to them so *easy to believe*. Unless we can claim as much for our presentation of the gospel we had better leave off preaching. But St. Paul is very bold, he says: *If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost!* How so? Simply because the gospel being simply the good life and good work of Jesus, anyone looking at that and calling it evil, or failing to see its beauty and truth, must surely have had, so Paul thought, "*a conscience seared with a hot iron*".

36. Luther, in his turn, had a new living presenta-

tion to make, but it was not a hard theological proposition appealing to credulity, and to be swallowed whole without asking questions, as the *Lux Mundi* doctors would have us take their Christian physic.

“ With infinite heavings and strugglings and every conceivable expedient of evasion it (the mind) strains to avoid the immense conclusion which challenges it, catching eagerly at every refinement ; if so be, it may be possible to stop short of full acceptance of a truth so staggering as that the man Jesus was Himself the Eternal God. The first great wonder once grasped,” etc.—*Lux Mundi*, p. 240, 241.

Luther's doctrine seemed so self-evident that all the common people understood it at once—all the rough soldiers and the poor wayfaring men and women. It seems so simple to believe that souls after all could not jump out of Purgatory, simply because money rattled in Tetzels box, so reasonable to believe that real righteousness must turn upon some inward state and was not anything which could be bought from a priest for money ; that justification must be by Faith, not by such works as Rome prescribed. The new doctrine seemed self-evident. Luther was quite convinced (until bitter experience taught him the reverse) that if the Pope could only be got to listen to the new views, he must acquiesce in what was so very simple and obvious as the need of a spiritual change within, and a moral reform without. Indeed, all reformers who have had any success, have taken their stand on the essential simplicity and credibility of their message. The first essay by Dr. Temple, now Bishop of London, in *Essays and Reviews*, is a good example of this—its whole theory and argument is essentially credible, connected, and satisfactory. There is nothing in the *Lux Mundi* approaching to it in

cogency or ability. A tardy and timid adhesion to evolution and a practical rejection of verbal Inspiration are the nearest approaches; but the book, as a whole, has unhappily missed what must ever be the chief point of every Doctrinal Reform, viz., the making *Religious Truth* easy to hold, because self-evident. This, and it should be proclaimed from the house-tops, is the one end of the three creeds—the Nicene Creed was accepted because it was a popular amplification and simplification of the Apostles' Creed. The Doctrine of Athanasius was accepted because it was quite intelligible to his own age, the points of difference between him and Arius were discussed with the hottest interest, and clearest *supposed* understanding in the streets of Alexandria—just as Home Rule or Disestablishment are discussed now in the penny papers. Athanasius prevailed because what he said sounded true in the ears of the majority. Truer than what Arius said—his appeal throughout was to credibility alone. The Athanasian Creed, in so far as it was popular, was so because it was thought to add a fine dogmatic emphasis to what Athanasius had said, and to damn everybody who did not believe what was true, and nothing could be more congenial to the age than such stout sentiments. The meaning and force of every Church Council and every confession since has been precisely the same—each appealing by interminable arguments to what seemed most credible. Had it not been found needful to change the forms of appeal for this purpose, we should have had one creed, not three creeds; one confession, not at least five important and differently characteristic ones, *e.g.*, the Council

of Trent, the Lutheran, the Calvinistic, the Anglican (or Thirty-nine Articles), the Puritan or Westminster Confession of Faith, and each at the time was accepted and got its vogue not because it riveted on the faithful things hard to believe, a sort of "swallow or die!" doctrine, but because it embodied what, at the time, seemed most probably true about religion. And until our *Lux Mundi* doctors can do as much, they will find that "*of making of books there is indeed no end,*" whilst their readers will be liable to discover "*that much study is a weariness to the flesh*".

37. Before closing this section I will speak of the cardinal doctrine of the Trinity which underlies all the creeds and is the keynote of the Christian Religion. Is the doctrine of the Trinity true? and to this the answer is according to our present method—"YES and NO". First let us take the *No*. The Athanasian Creed, for instance let us say, is absolutely unconvincing, or unintelligible in its propositions, and preposterous in its denunciations; so does it seem *now* to the average lay mind—and to the average lay mind must creeds and confessions be addressed or they are valueless as general confessions of Faith. Once it all seemed quite simple, but it is far from seeming quite simple now. To say that the Father is incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible, uncreated and eternal, to say that as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every person by himself to be God and Lord, so are we forbidden by the Catholic Religion to say there be three Gods or three Lords.

To say that each incomprehensible and uncreated Person is by Himself—and yet somehow He does not count for One, but that only all Three together count for One—to say, concerning such a proposition, that it conveys, in our translation, any intelligible meaning whatever to the average Englishman, is simply to trifle with experience, but to say that everyone who does not keep whole and undefiled the letter of such a Faith shall be damned for ever is simply to qualify oneself for a lunatic asylum. We don't say it need have been so once, any more than it seemed cruel once to skin people alive for not believing in the Virgin, or to fry them slowly for not believing in Transubstantiation, but the Athanasian Creed sounds as senseless now to average human ears as the methods of the Holy Roman Inquisition now seem cruel to average human hearts. Put the doctrine of the Trinity so, and ask, "Is it true?" and we say NO! Now turn to the Thirty-nine Articles. Article number one. Here we get rather a smoother statement, something not quite so repugnant to taste and honourably free from the inhuman barbarity of the Dark Ages, but hardly more intelligible;—A God "the Maker of all things, without body, parts, or passions," and though without passions or emotional forces, yet capable of love and wisdom—yea, the source of both (see my *Thoughts for the Times*, 16th ed., p. 178), and so on at each step in the analysis the Western mind plunges deeper and deeper into the fog of late Greek metaphysics, translated, and perhaps but imperfectly grasped, by late western theologians. Ask concerning the doctrine of the Trinity even as it

comes before us in the XXXIX. Articles, *Is it true?* and again the answer seems to be "No!"

38. But if, whilst repudiating the present fitness of such past expressional *letters*—which have once been alive but are now dead—we ask, is the doctrine of the Trinity in its essence and *spirit* true? we answer, *Yes*. Of the Athanasian Creed and of the first Article it may be written, These were true, they are no longer true—concerning the verity which both strive to formulate—it must be written "IT IS TRUE". I cannot do better than quote succinctly words in which I have sought so to re-state this doctrine as to make it seem not only credible, but necessary to all clear thinking about God. The conception of variety in Unity, the Many and the One, pervades all life and nature, and is presented to us in man in a trinity of Body, Mind, and Spirit. So Trinity in Unity is in God a diversity of manifestation, or function, combined with a unity of life and purpose. We can hardly think of the Almighty in any other way. It is the normal order of thought metaphysically. Let us see. First, our conception of God is vague and indefinite, Creative Force pervading, correlating, co-ordinating all things everywhere. This is the All-Father, the First Person. But the instant we think more closely, our only definite conception proves insensibly anthropomorphic. All power, wisdom, intelligence, love, is, in some sort, *human*, manifested and transferred to God, but still *human* in nature and thought; and thus the Ideal Man, the God under the limitations of humanity, steps forth. This would be so in the

order of thought were there no figure of Jesus in history. We cannot but—we always have made God in our own image, God the Son, or the Second Person. But in prayer and worship He is apprehended as a Spirit only, in communion, in sympathy with ours; then He is God the Holy Ghost, or the Third Person. God the Vague, God the Definite, God the Immanent, that is the inexorable order of thought, and that is the eternal doctrine of the Trinity in Unity. If now it is thought that I have laid myself open to the charge of teaching that there is but one person under three separate manifestations (Sabellianism), it would not be difficult, with Ward Beecher, to identify Manifestation with Personality, for though the beings we know of in this world possess Unity without diverse Personality, this need not exhaust all possible modes of being, and in the Divine Being there may be some such agglomeration of *faculties*, into ontological concepts so that as our faculties are grouped only into a Unity of Person—in God, *Personalities* may be grouped into some higher and diviner Unity. The Christian Creeds, then, aim at eternal verities. They are not verbally inspired, but their truth may be spiritually discerned by us now. They are true not always in the letter that killeth, but always in the spirit that giveth life. What more do you want?



III.

IS GOD OMNIPOTENT?
“*YES AND NO*”.

III.

39. Contact between God and Man—Homogeneity of Mind. 40. Two ways of apprehending God—from Without and from Within. 41. Five Central Points in Man's apprehension of God. 42. Two Propositions admitted by John Stuart Mill. 43. God in a sense not Omnipotent. 44. Certain obvious limitations to all power. 45. Progressive Moral Development. 46. God Omnipotent after all, ultimately and for ever. 47. Our share in the Divine Scheme.



III.

IS GOD OMNIPOTENT?

“YES AND NO!”

39. But can we contemplate Him at all, is He in any sense knowable or realizable? Some say He is not. Lie on your back and look up into the starry night. Think of those huge globes rolled in space. Think of the Power that rolls them. What can such a minute speck of dust as you be to Him or He to you? The answer is that I can think these thoughts about Him. That is enough. Matter and immensity cannot crush one thought or be weighed against it. Mind is Homogeneous, *of the same kind everywhere*. There is mind in me. There is mind manifested in the universe, mind is the ground of fellowship between God and man, mind is the point of contact—*τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν* wrote the Greek poet quoted by St. Paul, “we too are His offspring”. He may be the *High and Holy one inhabiting eternity*. But He dwells also *with those that are of a humble and contrite heart*, therefore I am worthy to contemplate Him, I am able relatively to comprehend Him, I am fitted affectionally to adore Him.

40. Now there are two ways of apprehending what

some have called the Unknown and Eternal One. He is manifest in phenomena without us, "*The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made*".—Rom. i. He is mirrored in the soul within, "*Eye hath not seen nor ear heard the good things which God hath prepared for them that love Him, but God hath revealed them unto us by His spirit*".—I Cor. ii. 9. Now what does this double deliverance of Himself to man come to? What has the double world of nature and human nature to say concerning the nature of God, and our relation to Him? What is the verdict of the ages? What in the struggle for existence amongst beliefs remains as the survival of the fittest—an optimist or a pessimist God? I say unhesitatingly Optimism survives. In many early and in all debased religions, there is a declared dash of pessimism—but it gets worked out of the spiritual systems of the world—just as poison gets worked out of a vigorous healthy body. There were in idolatrous systems *Lords many and Gods many*. Good and bad. In the worst systems like the Baal and Moloch cults and the cults of many savage tribes at the present day the bad alone seemed to prevail, but this is never the case in any of the higher religions which have ruled the civilisation of the ages. A latent monotheism has been at the root of all these; even in the religions of Greece and Rome there was one God sovereign over the rest, the controlling Zeus or Jupiter. In Zoroastrianism the religion of Ormuzd and Ahriman, the good and evil spirits, the dualism is more apparent than real; at bottom it was after all a

monotheistic optimism latent, since Ormuzd was surely to prevail finally over Ahriman. The one Good Will went forward ever conquering and to conquer.

41. What then are the five central points in connection with the Deity which emerge as creedal survivals of the fittest in the religious evolution of the ages? First: *God is Mind governing Matter.* This is alike the centre of Indo-Iranian and Egyptian, and the derived Greek and Latin religions—it is the heart of Judaism. “*The spirit of God moved on the face of the waters*” and brought order out of Chaos. It was mind governing matter. Secondly: *God is a Law of Righteousness impressed on human society.* This is confessed more or less distinctly by all the higher religions, but it is the glory of Judaism to have given the Moral Law a first place. Moses even made morals and religion (separated in many idolatrous religions) inseparable. The peculiar and solemn emphasis in the name of one central Will of the “THOU SHALT, THOU SHALT NOT,” of Sinai is the Jew’s immortal contribution to the religions of the world. Thirdly: *That God means well to man.* “*The Father Himself loveth you.*” Fourthly: *That God manifests Himself to man.* Divine nature being apprehended through human nature, as Jesus said: “*He who hath seen me hath seen the Father*”. Fifthly: *That God enters into communion with man.* All rituals of approach mean this—

“Spirit to spirit, ghost to ghost,”

on the ground of reciprocal conditions as Jesus says : “*If a man love me my Father will love Him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.*”

42. Now these five deliverances concerning the Deity, arrived at partly through the mirror of the soul, and partly through the contemplation of nature, may be called the *Fittest spiritual survivals*. They ring from age to age through the brain and heart of man, they seem, whether scientifically proved or not, to be such as can rationally be believed, because they belong to a certain deep-seated generic consciousness of the race, and seem to be involved in the very constitution of human nature. That I suppose is why they are inextinguishable. But I can narrow the ground still further, and roll the five points into two propositions, which will suffice for my present purpose. I will therefore assume for the sake of argument as *certain*, the two propositions about God which J. S. Mill considers *probable*, after all the severest logical deductions have been made. First : *The universe is governed by a unity of will—a sovereign intelligence*. Secondly : *The intelligence has man's ultimate welfare as one end, if not the only end in view*; and this is perhaps why He has permitted that Sovereign Good—that one thing which makes life worth living—the *embodiment of intelligence outside Himself*.

43. Are we at last to start fair then with a solid belief in an All Powerful, All Wise, and All Good Deity. No sooner are we out on these deep waters, than we find ourselves suddenly on the rocks of Doubt. If He is All Powerful, He cannot be All Good or why does He permit evil? If He is All Good, He cannot be All wise, or He would have devised a universe without pain. If He is All Wise and All Good, He

cannot be All Powerful, and that is now the question which we have to face frankly. I agree with John Stuart Mill—*God may be All good, He may be All wise, but His goodness and wisdom can only be saved by some inscrutable and mysterious limitation of His power.* This is not the best *conceivable* world, but it may be the best *possible* world, the child's question: "If God is good why does not God kill the Devil," can only be answered in this way, "The Devil, or if you will the Evil principle in Nature, that which *lets and hinders,*" cannot be all at once put away out of the universe. The event of the struggle may not be *doubtful*, but it must be *delayed*. There is a sense in which the answer to the question, Is God omnipotent? seems thus to be "*No*".

44. After all why should any Thing or any One be omnipotent in the literal and absolute sense of the word? That such a thing as absolute omnipotence exists is at best (however widespread and popular) a highly fanciful and arbitrary assumption and it is certainly directly opposed to facts. In this absolute sense clearly God cannot be omnipotent. He cannot accomplish that which involves a contradiction in terms. He cannot make a thing to be and not to be at the same time, therefore there is an *ontological* limitation to His power. God cannot cause two and two to make five, or two parallel lines to enclose a space, or two sides of a triangle to be less than the third side, therefore there is a *mathematical* limitation to His power. God if He be All wise and All good cannot do wrong, therefore there is a *moral* limitation to His power.

God if He delegates life to His creatures robs Himself of just so much control over that life as He gives to them—(delegated gifts mean limitation)—God Himself thus places a *creative* limitation to His own power. God, if He dowers His intelligent creatures with *Freewill*, admits a further self-limitation—an *evolutionary* or *developmental* limitation. Then if omnipotence must be qualified by all these necessary or admitted limitations, viz., *mathematical, ontological, moral, creative, evolutionary, and developmental*—why not one more mysterious limitation the reason for which and the nature of which may transcend our present faculties of comprehension ;—why not assume as a hypothesis which explains more facts than any other, and at once saves the Goodness and Wisdom of God—why not assume that in matter and force and the eternal constitution of things there is a something intractable which refuses to yield *all at once* to Wisdom and Goodness—or put it thus : The necessary law of progress from lower to higher, involves in its earlier stages at least a conflict with Evil and Pain, from which in its higher stages it tends to work itself free. Here is the training ground. We are put here to start with human responsibility. We could not be developed were not our choice free (else should we be mere dummies)—and if free, free to choose evil as well as good. In this conflict we meet with pain, and we propagate misery and disease, but we shall come through and win. Yonder we shall work out our deliverance, however inseparable moral and physical evil may be from this rudimentary stage.

45. You may ask, "How do you know it will ever be otherwise? will not freedom of choice always be before us, and therefore the *wrong choice* or *sin* ever possible, and the door ever open to moral evil?" I answer "YES and NO". Certainly we may be at the end of this stage, and in all more forward stages of development, *free* to choose, but *in proportion* to our progress, less and less *likely* to choose wrong, in that sentient universe of morally constituted beings passing on and up from Glory to Glory. The "*lets and hindrances*," with their dire consequences will increasingly fall off, sin will be to us increasingly less and less probable, less and less alluring, and at last it may become next to *impossible*. A Bank clerk, by dint of practice and habit, acquires an accuracy almost instinctive—his brain has become like the memory of an actor, automatic, and it is almost as impossible to an actor to make a mistake in his part as for the Bank clerk to add up a column wrong. It is easy to admit that it is next to impossible to imagine a skilled Bank clerk making a mistake in simple addition, he has got beyond that—but it is quite impossible to imagine Cardinal Manning or the Archbishop of Canterbury coming out to dine and pocketing your silver spoons. They are known to have entirely passed out of that rudimentary stage of moral development in which such things are done. Just so, we can imagine a state in which, though it might be still open to us to choose amiss, it would be next to impossible for us to do so, and moral evil and sin and its punishment will then have practically disappeared from our universe. God Almighty says

to you: "*Come, let us reason together,*" and you say, "How shall I know of a surety that I shall be delivered from this painful struggle with the world, the flesh, and the devil, and that Thy service will become perfect freedom?" And then, perhaps, into your mind, flashes the vision of a school boy who hates his Latin grammar, and has to be caned for his carelessness, and with many tears toils through the drudgery of school, but the master points onward to the *tripos*. A few years more the boy has learned—he holds Virgil and Sophocles in his hand for pleasure, his toilsome study has ended in joyful achievement, his triumph was gradual through pain and weary effort and many a stumble, but his triumph was not doubtful. So we may anticipate a future state in which all gross evil has vanished, and our exhilarating effort and energy is in the direction of joyful achievement—so works the accomplished artist, so works the finished musician, so will work forever and ever God's Elect in the land of Eternity, who are now but poor toiling students in the dayschool of Time.

46. Is God then not after all omnipotent? (Yes and No.) Yes, although in one way, and in an impossible manner "NO". In the most conclusive sense "YES," since he is omnipotent for *ultimate victory*. His action is steadily in the direction of *assured victory*, and limitation of power applies only to the method adopted, not the end accomplished, and such limitation—necessary, and often most intelligible, is recognised by us all in every department of life, whenever we use the phrase "*means to ends*". "Delayed (or as

the Scientists would say *evolutionary*) not defeated," is written over the grand Divine purposes glowing like suns with radiant Goodness and Love through earth's murky and distorting atmospheres—

“ Though the mills of God grind slowly,
Yet they grind exceeding small ”.

His purpose shall not fail. Nothing cuts clear and deep like water, but the Niagara river effects a cleavage of only a few inches in an age ; yet the mighty cleavage of the American cataract attests its irresistible power. You may watch a bowler at cricket : the moment you see the ball in his hand you know he means business, but the ball flies not all at once. There is a pause, a delay between purpose and execution, correlation of brain and muscle, calculation, and then an elaborate focusing of physical and mental energies of eye, and brain, and hand, and the ball at last shoots straight for the mark. God's bolts fly straight and sure, but they take time. Is He less for all practical purposes the *God of omnipotence*, because He is the God of gradual method, the God of Evolution ? The answer then to the question : *Is God omnipotent ?* is “ YES and NO ”. “ *Is He all powerful all at once ?* ” “ NO. ” “ *Is He all powerful ultimately and forever ?* ” “ YES. ”

47. The sum and substance of what has now been said is this :—First : We are by the constitution of our nature worthy to contemplate, able to comprehend, and fitted to adore the Deity. Secondly : The central points of God's nature and His purposes toward us as imaged in the Universe, and mirrored in the

soul are *Mind governing matter*—manifested as a *Law that makes for Righteousness*. We further gather that He *means us well*, that He *reveals Himself under the limitations of Humanity*, by which we understand that there is *something analogous to Human Mind in the Divine Mind*. That He seeks to enter into *communion with us*, and enables us to hold *communion with Him*—a fact which is the rationale of all Rituals of approach in all ages and in all climes. Thirdly: The central crux or difficulty of God's nature and His purposes toward us is the existence of so much evil and *wrong and misery under His rule*, and consequently the extreme difficulty of holding that He is *all powerful as well as all good and all wise*. Fourthly: This difficulty was solved when we answered the question: "*Is God omnipotent?*" by "YES and NO". And now, lastly, I ask: "*What is our share in that solution?*" God is now apprehended as working to subdue all things unto Himself. His hosts of intelligent and morally constituted creatures, dowered with personality, free will, and responsibility, are engaged along with Him in this mighty cosmic struggle. In the lower stages of the struggle, pain and evil and wrong have to be wrestled with and overthrown. In the higher regions, by an inevitable law of spiritual evolution, all these "lets and hindrances" will have reached a vanishing point—the point where Struggle is Joy, Work is Achievement, Service is Rest, and Obedience is Blessedness. But now the battle is set in array: the serried ranks press on, and every one is called upon to take his place in the great army of God, or declare

himself an open enemy. What! God needs us in His struggle with evil? Even so hath he appointed. We are "*fellow-workers* with Him". We dare not say that all that has to be done in such a warfare as this *could not* have been done by Him otherwise, or without us. We affirm, as a fact, it has not so been done. We are the chosen soldiers and allies—in unknown millions of worlds there may be unknown millions more similarly engaged. Each one is an element of victory in the great army of the Lord the multitude of whom no man can number. God's ultimate omnipotence at all events in the only sphere we are connected with is closely bound up with man's struggle against evil. And the end is not doubtful, "for He must reign until He has subdued all things under Him". What dignity, what definiteness of aim, what hopefulness does this impart to our earthly strivings—even the least of them. We seem to *see of the travail of our soul, and are satisfied*. The progressive victory is within. The progressive victory is also without. Every development in Wisdom, Love, Usefulness, in spiritual experience is a blow struck against malefic influences. Every thought *fights*, and every word *fights*, and every deed done in the body *builds up* the spiritual state which awaits you when you lay aside the burden of the flesh. O joy, to have got past the lessons, to do with ease and pleasure what once seemed so hard, to rejoice in activities the exercise of which was once felt as galling drudgery! The fight of faith is also the building up of the house not made with hands eternal in the heavens; every thought is a brick, every word a

corner-stone, every deed a pillar, and the impulses of a loving heart are the fair adornments, and its aspirations are the crown and pinnacle of that house, that spiritual temple set in the golden City of God, the New Jerusalem of the soul.



IV.

WAS JESUS GOD INCARNATE?
“*YES AND NO!*”

IV.

48. The Doctrine of the Incarnation needs restatement. 49. How can it be done? 50. Why must it be done? Our Conception of God has changed. 51. Complete Human Enclosure in Flesh, or Incarnation impossible for God. 52. The Problem—God being as we apprehend Him—How the Incarnation is to be redefined. 53. The Incarnation not to be Abolished or Denied. 54. The Story of the Three Synoptics. 55. The Story of St. John. 56. Two Theories current of old, Post-natal Transfusion and Pre-natal Infusion. 57. The Question settled under Constantine. 58. Which Theory is True? 59. Neither Can be Denied or Affirmed. 60. The Pre-Nicene position best. 61. Jesus' account of Himself. 62. Spiritual, not Logical—Religious, not Formal. 63. The Essential Doctrine. 64. The Doctrine of Athanasius. 65. The Doctrine of the Broad Church.



IV.

WAS JESUS GOD INCARNATE?

“*YES AND NO!*”

48. A writer in the “*Review of Reviews*” after reading carefully through “*Lux Mundi*,” which deals with the religion of the Incarnation, observes that one thing is clear, viz., the desirability of redefining or restating the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ ; most thoughtful persons will agree with him. “Do you believe,” it is commonly asked, “that Jesus Christ was God?” The answer to that question is not *yes* or *no*, but *yes and no*. “I believe that in some full and efficient sense Jesus Christ was a *bona fide* representation, and an essential Incarnation of God—*yes*.” “Do you believe that the Great God Almighty—the Creator of the ends of the earth—the High and Holy One that inhabiteth Eternity—came down and was born of a woman about 2000 years ago—that He walked about Galilee—that no one took much notice of Him for 30 years, that He then got into difficulties with the local police at Jerusalem. That the Roman soldiers—so many mere invisible specks of dust on the surface of our small globe—caught none other than the Great God Almighty Himself, beat Him cruelly with rods, spat upon Him, and at last crucified Him on Calvary, do you believe this ? ”

49. Instinctively at these words a murmur of "No! No!—surely not quite that!" would run through any congregation in the 19th century. Some indeed might be restrained by orthodox opinion which states substantially and only a little less baldly, that some such monstrous sounding statement as I have just made is simply the true Faith on the subject of the Incarnation. Still when it is put plainly as I have just put it, people have a sense of being unfairly handled. How then shall we handle them fairly?—in what way shall we state or redefine the Divinity of Jesus, so as to make it seem as credible and reasonable now as it was once when stated in the old Nicene form?

50. First: I must ask why does the "Great Almighty-God-made-man dogma? seem unreasonable now, and why did it seem reasonable once? The reason why (has it never yet occurred to 19th century theologians?) lies in a nut shell. It is self-evident when once called attention to. The old way of stating the Divinity of Jesus now seems unreasonable and out of harmony with the age, *because we have changed our conception of GOD, without changing our conception of CHRIST.* Naturally mental confusion is the result. For if you change one term of a proposition you must change every related term or your proposition won't hang together. Now our view of God is different from the Greek and Roman views held in the 1st century, or even the Mediæval Christian view. God was in those days even as He was in Genesis, a magnified man up in some Olympus, and later on a magnified man up in the

Christian clouds. He came, or *they* came down sometimes. They had not far to come. Besides it seemed a simple matter—the entire God being conceived of as a limited Personality ; the entire God could be easily transferred from one place to another. Apollo and Mercury thus paid a domiciliary visit to that exemplary old couple Philemon and Baucis. Pluto came up and stole Persephone, and Jupiter, incarnate in a bull, captured Europa. Apollo thought it worth while to shoot all Niobe's girls one by one. So common an affair was it for the Gods to perambulate the world that when Paul and Barnabas arrived at Lystra and worked a miracle of healing, "*The Gods are come down !*" they all cried, *and Barnabas they called Jupiter, and Paul Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker,*" and out came the priests with the usual paraphernalia of sacrificial victims as a matter of course.

51. The Mediævals were intellectually very little better, for they painted God as an old man up in the Heavens with a long flowing white beard, and the Son, a young man, standing at His right hand, whilst the Spirit was incarnate in the swift dove proceeding from the Father and the Son. Such a presentation of the Holy Trinity would be intolerable now. Why? Because *we have changed our conception of Almighty God*, although we still retain primitive or mediæval verbal descriptions of Him. It ceases to be possible to transfer Him *in His entirety* to a human form. A perfect manifestation of Him as possessed of moral affectional, in a word, *Human* attributes—that is still

conceivable, for there is nothing outrageous in saying "Divine mind brought face to face with self-conscious intelligent creatures reveals itself in a Person as moral, order, affectional sympathy and all other true spiritual attributes of human nature, these being qualities which spring into activity in the Divine Mind—or rather being eternally latent in the very conception of mind to be *revealed* whenever the occasion makes it possible or calls for their manifestation. And this we may reverently affirm is so, owing to a certain property or character which is an essential of Divine Being. Therefore I say a perfect and personal manifestation of Him as possessed of moral and affectional *i.e.* human attributes is still conceivable, but that such a manifestation can be ontologically a complete enclosure (the old idea of Incarnation) of the entire Deity—No, simply because we have changed our idea of God. To us the Unseen Divinity is in nature "a Stream of Tendency by which all things fulfil the law of their own being". He is in Human Nature "a Moral Law which makes for righteousness" (Matthew Arnold). Contemplate we the miracle of minute insect life, or the galaxy of suns and planets rolled in space, or the fleeting generations of men upon the surface of the globe, or the Divine thoughts materialized in crystal—flashed on humming bird wings, or painted on flower—petal or sea shell—or surprise we glimpses of this moral mystic and affectional Being, mirrored in that Divine microcosm, the Human Soul. In any case to us God Almighty must be from henceforth and for ever on a scale beyond all human conception, *Mind governing Matter and evolving Love.* Well, *that is*

our God, and being that I repeat that He may be reasonably capable of *Divine manifestation under the limitation of Humanity*, but not of *complete Human enclosure*, and we must so restate the Divinity of Jesus as to make this evident before the doctrine of His Divinity will be again as generally received in the nineteenth century as The-God-Almighty-made-man Dogma was generally received in the Greek and Roman world of the third century.

52. Now let us thoroughly grasp this root principle: *change one term of a proposition and you must change all its related terms.* Change your conception of a sovereign as composed of twenty shillings, make it worth twenty-five shillings instead, and you must change your conception of a shilling, if you still insist upon twenty shillings making a sovereign. Change your idea of locomotion from a stage-coach to a steam engine, and you must change the stage-coach driver for the engine-driver, and the horses for boiling water and coal. Nor must you leave any horse at all behind. Nor can you make room for any horse in your new locomotive. His occupation is gone, so is the coachman's. You must change all your terms together. And when you change your God conception: you must also change your Christ conception. Change your idea of the First Person in the Trinity—you must change your idea of the second too. The Incarnation or Divinity of Christ was reasonable in *such and such a way*, when God Almighty was supposed to be *so and so*, and the question for nineteenth-century Christians is: in what way is His

Incarnation to be reasonably defined now when we perceive God Almighty to be *thus and thus*? That is, in a word, how the problem poses itself—if we read between the lines in the *Review of Reviews*—and rightly interpret the critic of *Lux Mundi*, who sighs for a redefinition of the Incarnation.

53. Let us now for comfort and edification settle it in our minds that the re-definition of Christ's Divinity consists neither in its abolition nor denial. It will draw its very life-blood from the heart of the Athanasian doctrine—it will be essentially Nicene. But above all, in order to satisfy Christian requirements, it must be formulated by the words of Jesus Christ Himself. Now, with the answers to the following three questions, the required re-definition of the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ will emerge. These are the three reconstructive questions. First: What say the four Evangelists about the birth or origin of Jesus Christ? Secondly: What says Jesus Christ about Himself? Thirdly: What said the Church about Him at the Council of Nicæa—what, in other words, has the true Athanasian Doctrine of the Incarnation extracted of imperishable material from the four Evangelists, and especially from the words of Jesus Christ about Himself.

54. First: What say the four Evangelists about the birth and origin of Jesus Christ? Mark is the earliest of the four, 70-5 A.D. In Mark there is no genealogy of the parents, no childhood, no miraculous

conception. As to the mode of the Incarnation, Mark is silent or Agnostic. Matthew in 80-90 A.D. The descent of Joseph is given out of deference to the first and earliest tradition that *Joseph was the Father of Jesus* ("as was supposed") but side by side with the early tradition now appears the other account of the miraculous conception. Matthew therefore records both the early and the later tradition (favouring the later). Firstly: that He was the Son of Joseph. Secondly, that He was miraculously conceived. Thirdly: Luke repeats the entirely irrelevant genealogy of Joseph, who, now that the later tradition had taken deep root, was assumed to have no part or lot in the parentage of Jesus, but the Joseph genealogy being earliest was too firmly fixed to be uprooted, Luke however the companion of Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, also emphasises the miraculous conception. This mode of Incarnation, so repugnant to the Jew, was very acceptable to the Gentile, for whom Luke wrote. The two traditions in Luke also stand side by side. The first indicated by the *retained genealogy of Joseph*—the second emphasized by *a detailed and well-rounded account of the miraculous birth*.

55. Lastly. St. John, 100 A.D., or even later, is silent about the miraculous birth and childhood, but strikes the very key-note of the Athanasian doctrine. "*In the beginning was the Word*" (*sic*). There we have *the co-eternity and consubstantiality with God of that essential Human nature (seat of moral and affectional attributes) which came forth in time Incarnate in Jesus Christ*.

56. Now from these statements in the four Evangelists I infer that in the first century there were two distinct theories current concerning the origin of Jesus—both theories admitted that He was Divine—but one to which Mark seems to lean, *the early and the only one which the Jewish Christian was inclined to accept* was that Jesus was the Son of Joseph and Mary, but still the *Divine Jewish Messiah*, but Divine by *post-natal* transfusion of Deity. The other, a doctrine easily accepted by the Gentiles, who were well accustomed to the varied commerce of Gods with human beings, declared that Jesus was divine by *pre-natal infusion*, Joseph being nothing but the reputed or supposed father. This doctrine was accepted as naturally by the Gentile Christian, to whom through Paul the future of Christianity belonged, as it was rejected absolutely by the Jewish Christian, who represented the infected and moribund Christian stock; for the Gentile could as little hold that the Divine claims of Jesus were less than those of the Gods he had recently worshipped, as the Jewish Christian could admit that Jesus was co-equal with God Himself, or in fact anything more than the Jewish Messiah, and the proof of this position is that when the Christian Church decided in the fourth century to define the Divinity of Jesus in the sense which sounded like polytheism to the monotheistic Jew, there was an end to Judaic Christianity. It simply died out and left the Gentile in possession of the field until Mohammed arose and fought the same battle over again on the same ground, and it must be owned to a great extent won it at the expense of what

seemed to many the polytheism of the Christian Trinity. For obviously Mohammed defeated Trinitarian doctrine as effectually in Asia as Athanasius established it in Europe.

57. Now it is instructive to notice that up to the Council of Nicæa people were allowed to think very much as they pleased about the divinity of Jesus. They all agreed that he was divine, but Jew and Gentile defined the divinity each in his own way. There was no fixed Incarnation dogma until the days of Constantine. He it was who decided that for the peace and unity of the Church there should be henceforth but one doctrine on that subject. Suddenly the Church became certain that what had not been surely known, was now known to Athanasius and the small majority of Bishops in the Nicene Council who sided with him and carried the day. The tradition—the later, and not the earlier tradition, was thus to be fixed. Jesus was divine by *Prenatal Infusion*. That was the dogma against which may possibly be some day written as against other dogmas: “It was true; it is true; it is no longer true”.

58. Now as to the Prenatal Infusion and the Postnatal Transfusion theories in themselves—which is the most credible of the two? I can personally sympathise with those who say “*I really don’t know*”. “O,” but you reply, “*they knew*; the people of Nicæa knew.” “Some of them knew,” I rejoin, “but granting they knew, I don’t know *how* they knew. Nobody could have known unless the Virgin told them, and we

know the Virgin kept many things in her heart—this may have been amongst them. She may have kept this a long time. How could it have been commonly known in 70 A.D. when she was almost certainly dead? Yet it is hardly conceivable that Mark, writing the first biographical notice about that time, should have said nothing at all about it if he had known anything about it, and he belonged apparently to quite the inner circle of the immediate friends of the Virgin."

59. I have simply the two traditions placed before me by two out of the four Evangelists. To some the *Postnatal Transfusion* as the earlier tradition has always seemed more acceptable perhaps because it is the more reverent doctrine. Nor can I see why God should not be as perfectly manifested in that way as in the other; but I would not have the presumption to deny the *Prenatal Theory*, any more than I would have the presumption to affirm the *Postnatal Transfusion* positively.

60. Now the essence and real value of the Athanasian doctrine as we shall presently see lies behind any special dogma *postnatal* or *prenatal*. Meanwhile Christians might with advantage go at the back of the Nicene Council and plead the Nicene liberty, the evangelical right to be as uninformed as Mark, as divided as Matthew, as inconclusive as Luke, and as silent as John on the question of the miraculous conception. "*Haud scio an* ——" would be in this case a bit of Christian Agnosticism, which I for one would not object to, for I really don't exactly know,

and I cannot imagine how anyone should know the exact mode of the Incarnation, and still, with Jew and Gentile, long before the Council of Nicæa, I am ready to declare Jesus Christ to be God under the limitations of Humanity, and I will now apply to Him direct for the true meaning of that declaration.

61. Now come we to the words of Jesus about Himself. What was His own teaching concerning His own Incarnation and Divinity? Four times He describes Himself as Son of God, and eighty times as Son of man. The exact meaning which He attached, and which His immediate followers attached to the words Son of God, has given rise to endless controversy; but that is only because men have loved doctrines about Jesus more than Jesus. But what saith Jesus Himself? Although He was the Son of God, yet He said "*My Father is greater than I,*" i.e., God in His entirety never could suffer complete enclosure in human nature. There were infinite ranges, unimaginable spheres of Divine Being that lay outside humanity, and never could be expressed or revealed to man even in the Personality of Jesus Christ. "*My Father is greater than I.*" There was also a sense in which His Father was endowed with excellences beyond those which the Son could claim, for when someone called Him good, He said, "*Call no man good. There is none good but one, that is God.*" In some sense, according to the words of Jesus Himself, and they have some meaning or no meaning, God was described as transcending Jesus by certain degrees, and kinds of majesty and excellence which

in some way lay outside the range of human nature. Then, although He was the Son of God, Jesus was not omniscient. "*For of that day and hour knoweth no man—no not even the Son.*"* Neither was He so self-sufficing as to be beyond the need of human comfort—"Watch with me whilst I go and pray yonder". "He was tempted"—yes, "in all points like as we are". "He tasted death"—yes, "for every man"; though He was not holden by death even as we shall not be holden by death. In all these points He teaches us His true manhood. The doctrine of His Divine Nature is expressed characteristically with oriental vagueness, but is not the less sufficiently definite and intelligible to the spiritually minded. To Philip, He says, "*He who hath seen Me hath seen the Father*". Yet in another place, "*No man hath seen the Father*" (*sic*). There was then that in Almighty God which *could* be expressed and seen—*His human side*; and that which could not—*i.e., all that lay outside and beyond Humanity* in God. God, in His Humanity, could be seen—God in His entirety could not be seen. Again, Christ was "*in the Father*," but "*the Father was also in Christ*". Why surely this is what theo-

* Has it not occurred to the convocation critics of "*Lux Mundi*," who object to it being assumed that Jesus may have been limited or inaccurate in knowledge, when He ascribed a Post-Davidian Psalm to David, that He Himself gives up His claim to omniscience in this passage, and the Evangelist who relates that "*He grew in wisdom (i.e., that He knew less at one time than at another)*" gives it up for Him in another passage? What is this misguided zeal which claims for the Son of God, under human limitations, what both He and the Evangelist expressly renounced of their own accord?

logians would call deplorably loose sort of definition, and when we come to what might seem to be a statement of the *doctrine of the Blessed Trinity*, the utterances of Jesus seem in almost flagrant opposition to the letter of the Athanasian creed; for Jesus appears plainly to do what Athanasius is represented as denouncing—" *He confounded the Persons*". " *I*," says JESUS (the second person), " *will pray the FATHER (the first person) to send the COMFORTER (the third person)*," and then a little further on, He (the second person) declares that " *He will not leave them comfortless, but will Himself be to them the comforter*," that is the *Third Person* ! whom He, the *Second Person*, had just now prayed the FATHER to send ! Jesus thus confounded the Persons since He here promises to be Himself the COMFORTER or the *Third Person* !

62. But the doctrine of Christ's Divinity as expressed by Himself is essentially vague and elastic ; it appeals to the heart, to the spiritual sense more than to the intellect. To the spiritual man it presents no difficulty. To the carnally minded logician, every conceivable difficulty. As representing God to man, Christ was the Father in the Son. " *Thou in Me*," as presenting the ideal Humanity before God, He was the Son in the Father ; " *I in Thee*," as the divine love and influence brought into close contact with man, He was the One who would " *not leave us comfortless*," a Holy Influence or Spirit. All this is admirable in its appeal to the religious sense, and it is spiritually apprehended as divinely true, but it is

amazingly unlike the Athanasian Creed in the precise detail of that alarming formulary.

63. And now I come to the actually recoverable Truth concerning the Divinity of Jesus embedded in the Nicene Creed ; in other words, the Church's comment on the doctrine of the Incarnation, extracted from the Evangelists, and the words of Jesus about Himself. I affirm the Broad Church restatement of the divinity of Jesus is essentially Athanasian, based not on the clauses of the so-called Athanasian Creed, but on the central doctrine in the heart of Athanasius at the council of Nicæa, which is capable of transcending any number of such definitions and dogmas such as we find in the Athanasian Creed, or, for the matter of that, in the Nicene Creed either. The essential doctrine of the creeds is one thing, dogma, which is doctrine fixed in a special form, is another. The essential doctrine, living and always recoverable, is what we are about to disinter ; it is none other than the true Athanasian doctrine concerning the divinity of Jesus Christ. Let us now clearly understand this true doctrine of Athanasius.

64. Athanasius held the Homousion (Jesus *of the same nature as God*) in opposition to Arius, who held the Homoiousion doctrine (or Jesus *of a like nature with God*). Over these two words raged the battle at Nicæa. The heresy of Arius was not the denial that Christ was God. His heresy was that He, the Person Christ, *was* God—only *another* God. There was a time, said Arius, when Christ *was not*. God, the

Father, *caused Him* to be. That moment it seemed to the Nicene Fathers that there were two Gods ; and, if two, why not more? This, as it seemed to them, perilous approach to the Polytheism, or the many Gods of the heathen, is what set the Council in a flame. The Christian world had but too lately emerged from the curse of the "*Gods many and Lords many*". Then stood forth Athanasius with the very balm required : the reconciling, the eternal Truth of the "*Homoousion*"; the assertion that the Son was not of a *like* nature, but of the *same* nature with God. It was, therefore, Essential Deity which came forth in Jesus. There never was a time when that which then came forth *was not*. JESUS CHRIST; the WORD was *eternally begotten*, which means, the human attributes—moral, affectional, intelligent and self-conscious, in a word, *Humanity*—belong to the inmost and Primal nature of the Deity. It was no after-thought or after-creation. "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*" Athanasius had succeeded. He had so stated the Divinity of Christ that to the ears of Alexandrine and Greek metaphysicians it seemed not incompatible with the Unity of God.

65. Such is the doctrine for which Athanasius fought ; such is the doctrine which has had such surprising vitality, and which the Church has gone through so much to protect. The Athanasian doctrine rightly construed is also the Broad Church doctrine concerning the Divinity of the Lord Jesus. We believe that Jesus Christ was God under the

limitations of Humanity. That something which always had been in God came forth in Christ, *was manifested*. He was not all God, but true God, even as a cup of sea water is not the whole ocean, yet is true ocean. We believe that a special use was made of Human nature (when He was born of a woman, the Word becoming flesh) at a special crisis in human history (the fulness of time) for a special purpose: in order to seek and to save that which was lost, and so win us back to God by showing us plainly of the Father; by making us like Himself, and becoming actually Christ in us, the hope of glory; and so, by His perfect obedience and sacrifice, and His perfect union with God and man, reconciling us to God, setting God and man at one—or, more theologically speaking, making an At-one-ment for us. And we believe that all that could be expressed of God, His moral and affectional nature, His essential, eternally-begotten *Human Side*,—that verily was expressed, did struggle up into self-conscious revelation under human conditions in Jesus Christ, who grew and developed in wisdom and in knowledge and in favour both with God and man, and became our divine Friend and Saviour. Whether this was effected by *pre-natal infusion* or *post-natal transfusion* is to Broad Churchmen immaterial, since they believe the Divine Power could work out its manifestation in one way just as well as in the other. High Church and Low, following the later tradition in Matthew and Luke, may reply: "Well, we don't". Broad Church reply, following earlier tradition in Mark: "*Well, we do*". We believe, further, that the Divinely Human, having found self-expression in

Jesus for our sakes, because He was divine and came forth from God, was able to deliver not merely a speculatively hopeful message like any other good man or highly spiritual teacher, but an *authoritative message* concerning the good will of God to man, and that he revealed God's power to bless and His will to save us. We believe that He lived the true life out amongst men, and died for us all, *in* our service and *for* our sakes and *by* our sins; going, as it were, in amongst "the disordered wheels of this world's moral machinery in order to set them right," and allowing Himself, as a necessary consequence (for Christ needs must have suffered), to be bruised and crushed and torn by them, thus laying down His life for His friends. And this, also, we believe: that our human destiny is somehow inextricably bound up with God's own nature, and our struggle against evil with His struggle against evil. "*The Word was made Flesh*," and henceforth forever it stands clearly revealed that our human nature is none other than Divine, or actually akin to something in God's own nature; and that, although we struggle up in development through sin and imperfection, we shall be yet found "complete in Him," so that we all shall come, "in the unity of the Faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ". This is the Broad Church Faith expressed in these words: "And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord," which, except a man believe wholly, he shall not, without doubt, perish everlastingly; but which, if a man believe, it shall surely be as "a well of water within him, springing up into eternal life".

V.

IS THE IMITATION OF CHRIST POSSIBLE ?

“ NO AND YES ! ”

66. Literal Imitation becomes undesirable. 67. Literal Imitation of Christ impossible. 68. Modern arguments disposed of—Tolstoi unsound. 69. The Fallacy in such books as Joshua Davidson. 70. Early Christian social institutions of necessity transitory. 71. The sweet reasonableness of Jesus and the unreason of caricatures. 72. The real *Imitatio Christi*. 73. The Christ Ideal—Does it still endure ? 74. Yes, for it is the Sole Basis of Human Society. 75. It works in our Law Courts. 76. And in our Parliaments. 77. And in our Current Maxims. 78. And in our Manners. 79. Capital and Labour and Christianity. 80. Christianity and the Sexes. 81. Christ and Marriage. 82. Christ and Divorce. 83. Christ's Panacea. 84. Christ and Avarice. 86. Christ and the Poor.



V.

IS THE IMITATION OF CHRIST POSSIBLE?

“NO AND YES!”

66. “*Is the imitation of Christ possible in the nineteenth century?*” NO and YES. Imitation may have two meanings—you may copy *acts* or you may assimilate *character*. A personal imitation of Christ is neither possible nor desirable. Young men at Oxford imitated the late Cardinal Newman’s peculiar and reverential stoop, but that did not make them like the great Tractarian. Many of Liszt’s admirers aped his habit—of tossing back the head and flourishing the right hand before striking a note—but that did not make them play like Liszt. The negro dresses up like the European and affects our ways, but he only makes himself absurd, and you may dress up in a monk’s costume without bringing back the spirit or reviving the functions of monasticism, and so you may copy Christ literally, and only make yourself ridiculous. By obeying to the letter some of Christ’s precepts, you may actually break the spirit of His life. Dress like Jesus, put on the garb of the East, lie down at meat, speak in parables and paradoxes, and your well meant imitation or copy would seem merely irreverent and absurd. Nay, if all men lived un-

married like Jesus, the population of the world would have been extinct for about 1800 years! And the poet's tremendous vision in which—

Ships were drifting with the dead,
To shores where all was dumb—

would have been long since realised. Deal with the poor as Christ dealt and fittingly dealt with them in His day, and you would vastly increase instead of diminishing pauperism. Again, obey Jesus literally: "hate father and mother," according to the letter of his instructions,—would that be really Christlike? All this copy-book Christianity is a caricature, all this unintelligent literal obedience is a mistake. The letter may actually *kill*. The other day I heard of a sister of mercy in charge of a sick person, with instructions to give stimulant every half-hour only, she measured the time and she measured the dose, and although the patient was in a deadly syncope five minutes before the time, yet she refused to administer the restorative, and at the half-hour it was too late. The patient was beyond help, the letter of the instruction, the spirit of it not having been grasped, had actually *killed*.

67. Can you imitate Christ in the nineteenth century? I answer, *No*. A servile copy? *No*. An unintelligent and literal obedience? *No*. Jesus was humanly speaking an Oriental—we are Westerns. His religion was once in opposition; it is now nominally the religion of the civilised world. His environments were not like ours, personally and locally in many

ways you cannot imitate Him without running counter to His own "sweet reasonableness," to the very spirit of His life and work. No, you must not copy Him.

68. All the Arguments therefore against the possibility of being a Christian in the nineteenth century, based on the ridiculous assumption that to be a Christian is to *copy* Christ, fall to the ground. The spice of unreason in Count Tolstoi's system lies there—the fallacy of such books as *Joshua Davidson* lies there.

69. A word about *Joshua Davidson*. That book professes to describe a man who exactly imitated Jesus. As Joshua Davidson was persecuted and finally killed in consequence of his absurdities, the moral is: "If you live like Jesus now, although the world is nominally Christian, you will be persecuted and killed—therefore Christianity in your Christian world is practically impossible, has failed to justify itself to modern civilisation, or to conquer the world—it has been tried and has failed. Jesus was naturally a martyr, He was fighting a new cause. Granted, but if nineteen centuries after Christ, all who really follow Him are also to be martyrs, Jesus and His religion have failed. You must grant that—witness the fate of Joshua Davidson!" The real answer to this is, first, "Joshua Davidson did not live like Christ nor act like Christ. He was not even the literal and exact copy he was meant to be." I pause over that point. Joshua Davidson lived in the same house with a woman of bad repute, and an open burglar. These

were his chosen and intimate associates. Jesus never did anything of the kind. His chosen friends were as far as I can gather, extremely respectable ; there was nothing against Peter and James and John. Judas was the only traitor, but he passed for an honest man, or he would not have been treasurer, and been allowed to carry the bag. Matthew the publican was not loved by the Jews, no doubt, but that was because he was a Roman official ; still he was quite respectable. Mary Magdalene was a hanger-on of the group, but she was avowedly a converted and reformed woman, but I never read that Jesus lived in the same house with her. He frequented the house of Martha and Mary and Lazarus, but they were highly respectable. The worst that was said of Jesus was that He was the friend of publicans and sinners and that He was fond of good living ; but this was only said by His enemies, and even they did not confound Him with the criminals He pitied and was kind to. Jesus was never confounded with the criminal population till quite in the last days, when He came into conflict with the Roman Authorities at Jerusalem who had no time for fine distinctions between people who were charged with breaking the law, but even to the last, Pilate the chief magistrate refused to class Jesus with the other criminals, and would have let Him off if he could have done so without danger to himself. Again, Joshua Davidson at last dies in a street scuffle, whilst fighting with the Paris Commune against the constituted authorities. Jesus never opposed the constituted authorities. The money changers in the Temple courts were no better than unlicensed hawkers. "*His*

Kingdom," He said, "*was not of this world, else would his disciples fight.*" Bad as Cæsar was—and he was very bad—being such an one as the Emperor Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, Jesus still said, "*Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's and unto God the things which are God's*". There is no greater mistake than to suppose that had Jesus lived now, He would have been a Politician—Communist or what not. That was not His, or His Father's business. His kingdom was not of this world.

70. A great deal has been made of the communism of the early Christians, but that was no essential part of Christianity. It was a detail, an accident, a method suitable to a small and originally close community. They could not well do anything else but have "all things in common". The form of early Christian life, like early Christian government, was in its very nature local and transitory. The expansion of Christianity necessarily involved changes in both. A return to either is not Christianity, any more than a return to bows and arrows would be war. It would be what Joshua Davidson exemplified—folly on one side and slaughter on the other. The conduct of Joshua Davidson, then, in living with bad people, and in opposing the civil and military authorities, was exactly opposed to the conduct and policy of Christ, who avoided both these fatuous mistakes.

71. Matthew Arnold has pointed out very forcibly, that what impressed all impartial observers about Jesus Christ was His "sweet reasonableness," a quality in which Joshua Davidson was again conspicuously

deficient. This foolish person never saw when it was reasonable and when unreasonable to apply Christ's words and copy Christ's acts. He was not even sensible enough to know what was and what was not a literal copy of Christ's life. People were as much struck by the good sense of Jesus as they might well be appalled by the nonsense spoken by Joshua Davidson in the name of Jesus. And, therefore, we read that the people were "*very attentive*" to hear Jesus, but that they would not listen to Joshua. "*They wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of Christ's mouth;*" but, as for Davidson, they only wondered how he could make such a fool of himself. The lawyer was struck by the force of Christ's replies; but the clever people soon gave Joshua up as hopeless. So exquisite was the fine rapier thrust of the Divine Master's good sense and spiritual subtlety, that at last no man durst ask Him any more questions. They left off questioning Joshua, because his replies failed to impress them. In a word, Joshua is a caricature of Christ's person, a parody of Christ's teaching, and a misrepresentation of Christ's acts. The cases of Jesus and Joshua, then, are in no respect parallel. Jesus *in spite* of his sweet reasonable moderation and divine good sense, was hunted in Samaria and crucified at Jerusalem. Joshua Davidson, *in consequence* of his unreason and well meant folly, was persecuted in London, and trampled to death in the streets of Paris. Joshua Davidson, in a word, is not even what he professes to be: a copy of Jesus in the nineteenth century.

72. But my contention is that if he had been a

true copy, the argument that Joshua Davidson's failure proves that Christianity was unfit for the nineteenth century, would amount to nothing, for real Christianity is not a servile copy of Jesus or a literal conformity to all His words; but the *absorption* of His Spirit and the *assimilation* of His life. That is the only *Imitatio Christi* of any use, and that is the only reasonable Christianity now.

73. It may be interesting to speculate exactly how Jesus would act *now* and *here*, if He came amongst us; but this is the only thing which it vitally concerns us to ask "Is Christianity played out?—has it become practically inoperative? or can we still meet life in His Temper, can we deal with human beings in His Spirit, can we reform the world with His Gospel, *i.e.*, with the proclamation of the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of Man, and the actual presence in the world of a Divine Spirit of goodness and love working in us, with us, through us. Is the Christ Ideal played out, or is it still the only perfect, flexible and ultimate statement of human excellence and moral endeavour? And what do we understand by the Christ life? The life of ENERGY; "*My Father worketh and I work*"—CONTROL; "*Christ pleased not Himself*"—LOVE; "*He loved His own unto the end*"—ASPIRATION; the eye, ever uplifted to "*His Father and our Father, His God and our God*". Is that life in its essence imitable? We answer confidently "YES".

74. The reason is obvious. Such essential Christianity as this can never grow out of date (however

muddled or mistaken our presentation of it may be at certain epochs). For such Christianity is simply the proclamation of the only conditions under which human society holds together, develops, and thrives. You can't get at the back of such principles as Christ stands for: they are positively ultimate and fundamental. The BROTHERHOOD OF MAN is the one thing which binds human society together—which prevents it falling like dissociated atoms into chaos. The FATHERHOOD OF GOD, revealed in a spiritual Presence within, and in an Emmanuel or present God without—stands in one form or another for all that lifts up life and purifies the world. Christianity so interpreted means the essential *cement* and *purification* of our human world. It not only aims at that, in spite of all the pessimism of such books as the *Service of Man* and *Joshua Davidson*—it actually accomplishes in an ever-ascending scale of successful endeavour what it aims at. “*The offence of the cross*” may not have ceased, neither has the victory of the Cross. The world of Victoria, let pessimists rave as they will, is not so bad as the world of Nero and Caligula. Nineteen centuries of Christianity have not done as much as could be wished; but they have done something, and whilst rejoicing in the secular knowledge which “grows from more to more,” we need no fresh Gospel, no *new* principles of action, the leaven is working in the lump, the light is shining in the darkness, we need no other leaven, we call for no other light than “*that which lighteth every man which cometh into the world*”. The Christianity of Christ, in spite of *Joshua Davidson*, is not only

possible, it is the only possible influence which will ever set to rights, and is setting to rights the disordered machinery of this world. Let us see how the case actually stands.

75. *Our Law Courts are Christian.* You may call them corrupt, but go to Tangier or observe what is going on throughout the East where Judges are bribed and witnesses are black with perjury, and our law courts show up pure as the stainless snow. Listen to any sitting magistrate in London for an hour, and how much of the Christ-like spirit insensibly filters through his utterances. He listens, forbears, he advises, conciliates, avoids extremities, recommends conciliation, often refuses to push matters to a painful conclusion. A good magistrate, and there are many, is a sort of Christ to the people of our great cities. And see *how attentive they are to hear him.*

76. *Our Parliament is Christian.* The proof? You shall with difficulty pass a measure which seems opposed to Christian conscience, or charity, or justice. What is the history of the contagious diseases Acts? Their principle was held to compromise Christian purity. There was a bitter fight. At last they passed and became law, but an influential section of the community still held that they were opposed to Christian conscience, purity, and justice, and *they had to be repealed.* Those Acts in this Utilitarian nineteenth century could not stand up against what was understood to be the Christian

verdict. The same force of Christian opinion abolished slavery throughout the British Empire almost within the memory of man, passed laws for the protection of women and children, and has for nineteen centuries continued to found innumerable Hospitals, Asylums, Homes, and Orphanages.

77. *Our current Maxims are Christian.* The stage sentiments most popular with the gods in the gallery are always highly Christian. The triumph of innocence, the vindication of goodness, noble forbearance, disinterested forgiveness, resistance to temptation against fearful odds, the reclamation of the fallen, virtue and generosity crowned, Apollyon put to flight. The title *Christian Young Men's Association* is the stamp put upon centres of culture and knowledge of all kinds throughout the land, and it is at least as frequent as *Mechanics' Institute* or *Lyceum*. The very name *The Good Fellows*, is an echo of those brotherly bonds which knit the human family together, is Christian.

78. *Our Manners are Christian.* If you pass to the highest ranks of society you will observe that the best manners are stamped with the image and superscription at least of the noblest and sweetest Christianity. Unfortunately it is too often but a veneer, but if the "best people"—as Thackeray calls the "Upper Ten"—were always what they seem to be, full of sensitive consideration for others, longing to serve them—to avoid friction, to promote their comfort and ease, to postpone themselves and forget themselves in their desire to be all

things to all men,—why, what a little heaven below this earth would be. This exquisite affectation of sweetness and kindness which characterises fine manners is after all only a tribute to the Christian Ideal. Would that it were more often “an endeavour after the Christian life”.

79. But in truth, is there a problem of the present day with which Christianity is unfit to cope? I know not one. Take the difficulties between Capital and Labour. What is to bridge over the great chasm between rich and poor? What is to heal the bitterness and soreness between class and class, and restore amity, together with wellbeing? Not strikes, combinations, and conferences alone; these are but the ways and means of thrashing out questions, getting at facts and increasing knowledge. They will avail nothing apart from the spirit of brotherhood which is born of Christian love, and the sense of duty which is born of allegiance to something above both master and man, a Power and a Spirit lifting both into a sphere beyond avarice and greed, and constraining men to do right. The panacea for the quarrel between Capital and Labour is said to be Combination, Co-operation, and Profit sharing; and so it is, but were these three things, or any one of them, ever accomplished without some of the sweet reasonableness of Christ amongst the men, and a measure of the love and sacrifice of Christ amongst the masters?

80. Or take the difficulties between the sexes. What has Christ got to say to them? In all ages and countries there has been much irregularity in the

relations between the sexes and much unhappiness in consequence of that irregularity. There is much irregularity and much unhappiness now.

81. Has Christ got any panacea? He never meddled with the marriage laws. He assumed, I suppose, that the definition of marriage would differ in different ages and climates. He never expressed any opinion about the three kinds of marriage permitted by the Roman law. He never even interfered with Jewish Polygamy. The tendency of civilisation, and especially Christian civilisation, has been towards monogamy, but monogamy is a derived—not a direct—Christian, or even apostolical rule. Jesus dealt in detail with but one point in the mosaic marriage law. He declared it unlawful for a man, married or unmarried, to take a married woman. He does not touch the case of an unmarried woman, nor could He have argued it adversely without condemning a practice allowed by the law of Moses as well as by the Roman law, and He was careful never to collide with the civil law. The last collision was enforced by the Jewish authorities.

82. Again with regard to divorce, Jesus is constantly cited as being dead against divorce under all conceivable circumstances, save one. This is quite a mistake, and theologians have owing to their preconceived notions and prejudices been oddly blind to the qualifications Jesus Himself makes to His own sweeping statement about the unlawfulness of divorce. I know it will be answered Christ's utterances (Matt.

xix. 6-9, and Mark x. 9-11—I venture to quote from *Winged Words*)—are decisive against divorce.

“’Tis plain, who puts away his wife except for one cause sins, and causes her to sin, who marries after such divorce sins, and causes another to sin. Is that final against the universal divorce practices of Heathendom and Christendom? for even the Catholic Church has its dispensations and reservations. Is Christ's Veto on divorce final? I think not. Avoid building a universal rule on an isolated sentence. Christ often spoke decisively, and then explained and modified. His proposition or *text* arrested attention; His sermon or explanation applied or modified the sense and apparent meaning of the text. You often have the text without the sermon; the paradox without the explanation. But sometimes the modification is recorded. The gloss or the difficulty of the rich man going into heaven lay in the explanatory words, “*They that trust in riches,*” the gloss on “*ye must be born again,*” lay in “*born of water and the spirit*”. And, although theologians seem to have missed it, the gloss on “*those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder,*” is just hinted at in the words, “*all cannot receive this; he that can receive it let him receive it,*” which is as though He said, “I tell you what is best, I give you the counsel of perfection; you are not all equal to this heroic strain; I set before you the divine intention; what the human endeavour should aim at “*he that is able to receive it, let him receive it*”. A very different thing from the supposed indissolubility of marriage.”

83. But the panacea Jesus gives for the troubles and regulations of the sexes, just because it is not a rule but a principle, is capable of universal application. Whatever may be the definition of marriage, the Master lays down the principle that restraint in thought is the only thing which will enable people to conform to the marriage law or legal restraint on the sexes whatever that may happen to be in any special age or country. “It is the looking *on a woman to lust after her* that must be checked,” in all cases where she is not to be obtained, because *belonging to some one else*.

Jesus dealt not with legislation, but He did deal with those inward and spiritual principles and motives and impulses, which alone can make our laws binding. Once allow yourself to long, and to go on longing to break a law, and sooner or later you will be sure to break it. If you don't mean to *sin*, you must not *lust*. When the stone has begun to roll, it will be hard to stop it—it must be checked at the start. Has ever anything sounder than that been said about the right way to avoid irregularities between the sexes? So there too Christ still has the last word.

84. He deals with avarice and the lust of gold in precisely the same way. He points to a region of feeling which would make the lust of gold an impossible desire, just as He recommends a diversion of thought which would indispose the mind for the other form of lust. A man asks Him to remonstrate with his brother about some property that he wants to get his share of. Jesus refuses to mix Himself up with the rights of the question, but says: "*A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things he possesseth*". If both litigants could feel *that*, the particular difficulty would disappear. If both saw that brotherhood was better than gain, and amity than gold, and that not the quantity of money but the quality of heart, not what you had got but what you were, signified here and hereafter,—the money question would soon settle itself. And so, I think, in this greedy, money grubbing age, Jesus again has the last word.

85. There is one point, however, in which Science is said to be wiser than Jesus: it is in His method of deal-

ing with the diseased and wretched. Science strikes clear through that compassion and tenderness which is certainly the very tap-root of the Gospel. "It is not fair to the race," says Science, "it is not wise to keep alive the unhealthy, the idiotic, or for the matter of that, the criminal or the too aged. The sooner they die out the better. This Christian compassion of yours is most mischievous." Well, Christ takes the whole responsibility of that. He had, He still has, "*compassion on the multitude*," and to each one who imitates Him in this He still says: "*In so much as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me*". And this is the justification of Christian compassion. First; to aid and abet the survival of the physically fitted only is not necessarily best for the race, for how much does the world owe to those who have had noble or acute minds in suffering bodies? It is not for us to judge what mind and body is to be kept going, we cannot. We are bound to do the best for all. Even in extreme cases, compassion and its related character is itself to be tenderly nursed, as most useful and happiness-giving to the world—we dare not crush it or discourage it: it is at best a tender plant. There is not too much compassion in the world after nineteen centuries of Christian cultivation. But, lastly, and this is the crowning argument in favour of our Christian methods, compassion, kindness to the suffering, the support of the weak and aged, care even for insane and idiotic beings, belongs inseparably to that type of character by whose power alone human frailties and miseries will be gradually diminished and the race will be lifted above them.

VI.

IS THE HOLY GHOST A REALITY?

“ *YES !* ”

86. The Holy Ghost and the Trinity. 87. Grounds for Belief in God. 88. How God and Man hold Communion. 89. The Reality of Spirit. 90. The All-importance of Mind. 91. Spirit Triumphs over Matter. 92. Mind acts on Mind—The Dawn of a new Era. 93. The difference between Past and Present Phenomena. 94. This development non-moral intrinsically. 95. But it needs a Divine Controlling Influence. 96. The Divine Communion—Its Secret unknown. 97. Its Method explained. 98. The Laws of Holy Influences. 99. Attainable Mental Attributes. 100. God's Special Instruments.



VI.

IS THE HOLY GHOST A REALITY?

“ *YES!* ”

86. For Holy GHOST *read* HOLY SPIRIT, or MIND, or *Holy Influence*. But we are speaking of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. We need not, however, for our present purpose discuss that doctrine, it is sufficient to say the Trinity expresses the natural order of thought in which God unfolds himself to the human mind. The All-source from which all things flow is indeed the All-Father. As that vague conception becomes a more definite object of thought, and therefore takes on attributes, we discover God under human limitations, and when we seek to enter into communion with Him, Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost, He reveals Himself as God, the *Holy Influence* — *Spirit* or *Ghost*. With the Trinitarian controversy I shall not here further deal. It may or may not be difficult to avoid what the Nicene Council would have called heresy. It is doubtful whether St. John or our Lord Himself would have been considered quite orthodox by that fourth century assembly. I have personally always had a good deal of sympathy with the excellent Bishop at that memorable conclave, who in his anxiety to avoid Sabellianism fell into Patri-

passionism, and that other who, in his eagerness to stand clear of Patripassionism, drifted into Sabellianism. The reality of a Divine Influence is what I desire to realise now, but I must be first satisfied of the reality of a Divine Being before I can entertain even a thought about His influence. The ontological question precedes the functional one. Is there a God?

87. First the ground for a belief in the existence of a God. (a) John Stuart Mill tells us there is a probability in favour of the universe being ruled over by a Sovereign Intellect, and self-conscious Being. We are glad the critic of the pure reason will carry us so far. (b) Next I find that the scientific world has retired from the raw materialism which a few years ago was going to help us to account for the world without Mind, and for man without Spirit. It now seems it could not be done; it always turns out to be "*matter and force + x*" and the *Unknown*, the *Eternal* and other equally vague but significant words began to appear and do duty for GOD, just as *hypnotism* now does duty for *mesmerism*. (c) When I find myself and a good many others constituted like me, looking to the phenomena of religion in all ages of the world, I find that we are not constituted to believe that the World, and Human Nature, exists without a God, *i.e.*, some supreme self-conscious and intelligent source. The law of my mind impels me to that hypothesis as the one which best arranges and accounts for a large number of otherwise incoherent and heterogeneous facts. (d) Lastly, there is the filial cry

of the soul, which counts for a great deal more than some people would have us believe. St. Paul was quite sure of a public and human response, when he said, "*We have the earnest of the Spirit,*" and "*He hath sent His Spirit into our hearts whereby we cry Abba Father*".

88. But granted that He, God the Sovereign Will exists, does He hold communion with man? and if so, what is the ground of that communion? The word "*Holy Influence*" is strictly functional; it expresses a relation. It is *God in communion with man*. How can that be? The ground of this communion is Homogeneity; there is, as we have assumed, Mind in the Universe. There is, as we know, Mind in man; that is why it is possible for the Creator to hold communion with our spirits. The law of affinity brings us a step nearer to the truth. Homogeneity or likeness of substance, seems to involve a necessary relation of some kind, either of attraction or repulsion, and by the law of affinity mind seeks out mind. It is so between human minds incarnate. The Englishman we all know is capable of sitting opposite a fellow creature without speaking in a railway carriage, as long as any average mortal, all the way, for instance, between Boulogne and Paris; but even he will give in after a certain number of hours. Robinson Crusoe felt a pardonable curiosity, not wholly due to fear, with regard to the author of that mysterious foot-print which he found on the sands of his desert Island, and it is inconceivable to imagine two human beings in a lone land together,

seeing and meeting daily for weeks, without ever attempting to hold communion of some sort. In the long run it must come to the enquiry "*How are you?*" and the reply "*Who are you?*" As the human mind seeks the human mind by affinity, so too divine mind seeks the human by affinity and the human seeks the divine by affinity. As the sun mirrors himself in a thousand pools and ten thousand dew-drops, so does the light and heat of God tremble and vibrate in the millions who have been made in His own image, and into whose "*nostrils He has breathed the breath of life*". By spiritual affinity the Divine and human rush together. Man meets God in Prayer and Meditation. And this prayer is ever "the alone to the alone" in the Divine reality of a Divine communion. The ground of our belief in God is thus firmly seated in the head and the heart. The ground of our belief in God the Holy Spirit as a Divine Communicator between God and man is the law of Homogeneity and the law of Affinity.

89. But face to face with a world of matter and force, is not this talk of mind and spirit vague and unreal? On the contrary, spirit is the only reality of any importance whatever, *to us*. Does matter exist at all? We know not. In its last analysis it seems as Professor Crooks says, simply "*something unanalysable which possesses inertia and weight, yet intangible and hard to be conceived of, nor is there the least proof that it exists outside our own consciousness*"; since all we know of matter is through certain *sensations*, i.e., purely mental or spiritual things, produced apparently

by material objects, but of the objects themselves, if they exist apart from those sensations, we know nothing. But were Matter ever so real as perhaps it is, it would be absolutely unimportant apart from a Mind to be conscious of it. What would any bulk or any display of force signify, were there no one to be aware of it? So far from its being true that Mind without Matter must be non-existent, it seems more true to say that Matter without Mind would vanish.

90. Mind indeed gives its whole significance to matter. It captures it, wrestles with it, subdues it. The grosser forms of matter are worked up by that mysterious thing we call organic life into vegetable and animal creations. All the finer manifestations of Mind, demand the more subtle and impalpable forms of matter, subtle moistures, the breath, magnetic emanations and the personal and spiritual *aura*, which at present defies analysis. These are the conductors of the deepest soul messages, the very flower and bloom of human thought, emotion and sentiment. But Mind remains ever the all-important, the only important thing in life. The inner and not the outer rules. What is Paradise to a man with the toothache, yet that ache is a mental thing, what are Success, Fame, Power to man if the sword of Damocles in the shape of Discovery, Exposure, Fear, Death, hangs over him? All these are mental things, not gaseous, not liquid, not solid, not material, but mental things. What is an environment bright with beauty, and attractive with all luxury, if the only one being for whom the soul longeth is far away, or sick, or desolate, or un-

happy? A mental whim! aye, but one which blots out the whole world, and reduces the material universe to a hollow mockery and show, a phantasmagoria—unreal, dream-like, visionary!

91. But more than all this, in these last days we are beginning to admit that the Inner is all powerful to mould and modify the physical and material. How often have we seen the spirit overcoming the weakness and prostration of the flesh? Look at the Curé D'Ars, who, through a long life in so frail a body went through daily and nightly toils and feats of endurance that would have sufficed to prostrate many a stalwart frame. We are told now that strong mental impressions actually stamp their effects on the body, and that such supposed legends as the Story of the Stigmata, said to have been received by St. Francis and St. Theresa, and other saints, may very possibly have been neither delusions nor imposture, but *bona fide* phenomena. Dr. Tuckey in his recent book on hypnotic treatment by suggestion, has recorded some very curious cases quite as remarkable as the stigmata of the favoured saints.

92. We are further told, not by a parcel of credulous folk or by the clergy, but by scientific Doctors in Paris, London and Leeds that: Mind can mould Mind—that thought travels from brain to brain without the use of language—thus, Will is captured by Will, and constrained—that disease is expelled—that mental and emotional tendencies, by hypnotic suggestions merely, are checked, extirpated, or implanted—and

these things are done in our midst, and the facts seem at last undeniable. I wish to call special attention to the amazing spread of these phenomena, and the phenomena of so called Spiritualism, many of which are related to Hypnotism and Mesmerism *et id genus omne*. I believe we are on the verge of a new Era for Humanity—that human nature is about to take one of those strides in development which will lift the whole race a step up in the scale of mental and sentient being—a step it may be, as far in advance of present civilized man, as present civilized man is in advance of the savage. This lift up in the psychical evolution of the race has probably come about quite naturally and normally could we but understand and appreciate the forces of Mind wrestling with Matter that have been at work. The Printing Press, the Telephone, the Railway, the Microscope and Telescope, the rapid interchange of thought, the rapid leavening of the masses with every new thought, the colossal strides of Science, and locomotive discovery, synthesis and analysis, intense strain of business life, and quickening of all observant and perceptive faculties—these are the modern motors of that mental evolution which seems about to culminate in an extraordinary and diffused dominion of Mind over Matter. Before these new excitements, developments, and activities the idea of matter wears thin, and mind is seen at work behind it, like the vital machinery in certain small diaphanous fishes, which we may watch in a glass bowl—the atoms and molecules seem dominated and controlled almost visibly and immediately. A new or revived theory

of ontology is abroad. To conceive is to create. GOD said : "*Let there be light, and there was light,*" seems literally intelligible. To will is to possess, to think is to do. We live amidst the triumph of a refined analysis. The most subtle forms of matter betray their presence and yield up their secrets. The Radiometer and the Phonograph *are* the new parables of Nature. Even photographs of materialisations may not all be delusions or imposture, since we can now photograph stars that no telescope reveals, and detect the presence of matter in minute forms which elude the common senses.

93. Well, but such things as wraiths, levitations, will-power, and abnormal phenomena have always been alleged, no doubt, the Necromancers, Astrologers, Magicians, Exorcists, etc., of Egypt Assyria, Alchemists of the middle ages, and the Soothsayers throughout the East. The so-called miraculous element in both Old and New Testament attests the presence in the world of inexplicable phenomena, connected usually with personages abnormally constituted—Granted ! What, then, is the difference between this age, this New Era, the Epoch heralding in the step up in social, mental, and psychical development ? This—that whereas in past times such matters were kept close—practised by a few empirically, now the whole civilized world seems brought more or less to a pitch of psychical and mental sensibility. There has been a kind of levelling up of the masses, till at a certain point, the phenomena and faculties connected with them once confined to a

few, seem about to be extended to the many, or at least, placed within common reach as in the case of hypnotic cures and thought-reading. But more than this, now for the first time, these forces instead of being empirically treated, or persecuted, or suppressed, or denied, or worshipped, are likely to be patiently *investigated*, reduced to law, and the moment that this is done, and the causes and rationale of them emerge, the Occult Arts will take strides just like the Art of Music did, when the octave and perfect cadence were discovered in the sixteenth century. Science will shortly be the handmaid of Supernaturalism. Presently the race through the enormous enlargement and abnormal development of its mental and spiritual faculties, will likewise take strides, unknown and at present quite incalculable. We shall *command* the secret of making our presence felt at a distance, even as our voices are heard through the telephone and the phonograph. Perhaps we shall be able to appear a thousand miles off, as it is said portraits are about to be electrically transmitted, and as handwriting actually is. Visions of distant scenes will be called up, second sight, and clairvoyance, and clairsaudience will be cultivated and reduced to certainty, the truth about Ghosts tested, the rationale of prophecy discovered, the accumulation and direction of will-power examined, and the philosophy of prayer explained, so transcendent is the importance and the power of mind in its occult operations, and so startling are likely to be its manifestations and uses in the near future.

94. But, now, all this has nothing necessarily to do

with right and wrong, with *morals*, or with the Holy Ghost. The intellectual and psychical development going on around us, which even the scientific world, in spite of its dense blindness in such matters, is beginning to take notice of, is *ontological* and *unmoral*—a mere increase of power, an addition to human faculty (neither moral nor immoral, but, like all other powers, capable of being used for good or evil). It is conceivable that the force which cures disease may induce disease through the mind, that power which restores to sanity may also drive mad, that which suggests good thoughts may also suggest evil thoughts, that which inclines to good actions and fosters good tendencies may incite to murder and all acts of impurity or violence; and we know that this actually happens. The electrobiologist may defy justice, may compel to perjury, may elude or confound observers, may cause people to see and believe what is not and to ignore what is. If levitation and the transit of matter through matter is to be an art of common attainment within measurable distance—if thought-reading* is to be as common as conversation, and nothing is to be hid from quickened powers and second sight—what is to become of society in a few years? What, indeed! To those unacquainted with some or most of the Saltpetriere experiments at Paris, and the phenomena which are now puzzling the medical men and confounding the raw scientific materialists throughout Europe, all this talk may seem vague, superstitious and visionary to a degree. But those who know a little about what is going on around them will recognise the significance of that immense, unknown region of power—new

worlds, which the modern spirit or *Zeit Geist* has broken into in the latter half of this nineteenth century. Electrical science, avowedly in its infancy, seems at present the advanced meeting ground or transition plane between Mind and Matter, and a sort of open portal of communication between the two worlds, although Scientists cannot yet agree as to the identity of nerve force, or what used to be called "vitality," with Electricity in some shape.

95. The connection between these thoughts and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is not far to seek. Now immense increase of power, abnormal quickening of human faculty, means immense increase of responsibility. Power itself is, as we have said, unmoral, but it may be demoniacal or angelic. There is every reason to believe that it is both. No one can read Charcot's experiments or see the tricks of any travelling hypnotist without discovering traces of both. If, then, there is a widespread increase of new forces on one side and of susceptibility on the other side—was there ever a time when this clause of the creed rang out with more vital significance than now, "*I believe in the Holy Ghost—Spirit, Mind, Influence!*" Did we ever need such a Divine pilotage more than at this moment? I fear no ontological development with a Holy Ghost to guide. I shall be wrecked without it. *Is the Holy Ghost a reality?* Then becomes in the light of such thoughts a momentous—perhaps the most momentous—question for these latter days. How can I come into close contact with that Divine Influence? In-

deed, this is almost the only religious problem of essential moment.

96. I consider, therefore—First: The secret of Divine Communion. Secondly : The method of Divine Communion. The secret, or the why of Communion, must remain to us at all events a secret. Let the naturalist say *why* the grass grows with water, and sunlight, and air—he cannot. Let the hypnotist say *why* his patient is affected ; let anyone say *why* he has an antipathy for this person, and sympathy with that other ; *why* one face and heart is sealed, and another open to him ; who can explain the *open Sesames* of the soul ? they *are* we know, but none of us know *why*. And as the why of the commonest communion between one human being and another is unknown, so is the secret of Communion between the divine mind and the human—a mystery. The presence of Deity is a fact, the face of Deity is veiled.

97. But the *How* of communion—the method to be adopted—about this there is a tolerable unanimity. History and Experience guide us ; impelled doubtless by divine instincts the religious prophets of all ages and countries, by a sort of spiritual empiricism (or testing methods by trial), have arrived at something like a unanimity as to method or methods. To the intercommunion of the Divine and human spirit—for the guidance, enlightenment, and fortification of the latter—devout crowds are profitable, also the wilderness and the solitary places, the secret chamber when the door is shut. Forms for riveting the mind

and suggesting thought—light, rhythm of sound, colours and even odours of incense, and motions of the body, and symbolic ritual, and vestments, the tabernacle service of the Jew, the oracles and festival functions or mysteries Eleusinian and others of the heathen, the Holy of Holies and Urim and Thumim of the Jews, the Sacraments and elaborate ecclesiastical ordinances of the Christians—all have in view one and the same thing, viz., to produce conditions which favour the commerce between the human and the divine Spirit.

98. Holy influences have their laws. God's best gifts must be wooed and won; their spiritual conditions must be discovered, understood, and provided for. In the spiritual region, which is the highest, there is not less order than in lower spheres, but more. Our religion is too happy-go-lucky (so is not our business or our pleasure), but in the highest regions, in the royal concerns of the soul, there is as close a correspondence between cause and effect as in the lowest operations of nature, and the conditions of success are the more subtle as the achievement is the more exalted.

99. And as there are external conditions which facilitate, I had almost said constrain, the communion of the Divine with the Human, so are there internal conditions which I have elsewhere dwelt upon at some length (*vide* Speech in Season, *Concord and Concourse*). These are the attributes of the mind itself, internal soul temperature and tendencies which

can be cultivated or attained to, such as *Attention, Perseverance, Discipline, Practice*. And for the rest "*His face is veiled*"; we cannot lift the veil, we cannot show you the ranged angels and archangels in the central blue, as Angelico painted them (did he paint from visions of the inner eyes?), we cannot analyse the subtle mechanism whereby the brain molecules and nerve currents are captured and controlled emotionally and volitionally by the divine emanations. We cannot see with eye of mortal sense those flaming Ministers, those radiant forms which pass up and down the ladder "whose landing place is wrapt about with clouds of glory of Heaven"—our eyes are holden, the while our hearts burn within us. "No man shall see GOD and live," but we are permitted to feel the Presence and the Power, and to know beyond all possibility of error that He has His own divine method, His own appropriate and necessary intermediate agencies here or elsewhere in every department of life and being for the accomplishment of His blessed and benignant purposes. The Holy Spirit is not (in a world of wonderfully constituted order and harmoniously devised mechanism) the only power which works without order, harmony, and affectional adaption of spiritual mechanism—of that we may be well persuaded.

100. And what are His special instruments—how does the Holy Ghost the Comforter work? Who shall count the devices or measure the means of Divine manifestation. Now it may be the legion of Angels in waiting, but never summoned, hovering

above the dark shadows of Gethsemane, or the solitary angel permitted to strengthen the Divine sufferer as He raised the cup of agony to His lips and drained it to the dregs, or the tender whispers of grace that came to such an one as Paul the aged when the thorn in the flesh was wearing out all that remained of a body spent in his Master's service, or for one Divine moment in the life of Humanity it surely came as the very life and light of God tempered through the sweet human hands and lips and eyes of Him who breathed upon His Disciples and said, "*Receive ye the Holy Ghost, and lo, I am with you always even to the end of the world*". It concerns us little to know exactly how the Divine Spirit works, so only we recognise Him alike in the thunder of Sinai and in the still, small voice. So only we can say in such a world as this, stained with sin, and poisoned with demoniacal influence—" *I believe in the Holy Ghost*".



VII.

IS THE CHURCH A FIGMENT?

“NO!”

101. Is the Church a Figment? 102. Are its Aims illusory? 103. Reasons, no Reason. 104. The Church still radiates Influence. 105. The Church Universal. 106. The Two Key-notes. 107. Belief in the Divine Power. 108. The Institution which embodies the Belief. 109. The Christian Church's Foundation. 110. Three Realities. 111. Divine Authority. 112. The Reasons. 113. Persistent Form. 114. Regenerating Power. 115. The Holy Catholic Church.



VII.

IS THE CHURCH A FIGMENT?

“NO!”

101. *Is the Church a figment?* We know that bricks and mortar represent hard facts, yet an edifice may be badly built or built on sand. Is the base of the Church thus unreliable? is its superstructure artificial? Many solid-looking institutions suffer from these defects and come to nought. The Roman Inquisition, the rotten French monarchy of Louis XIV., and the equally unsound empire of Napoleon III. collapsed because they were built upon sand.

102. Again, are the Church's aims and objects visionary? are her principles chimerical? We are told so in these days. Science does not go to Church much, but pursues its own researches; if not in antipathy to most forms of religion, it is entirely outside them. Art goes very little to Church; formerly Religion was all Art, but now very little of our Art is Religion. The masses don't go to Church or Chapel; 'tis a common complaint with shepherds Anglican and Non-conformist. If, then neither Science nor Art nor Labour—no nor “Society”—in the bulk goes to Church, is there not a cause?

Is it out of place to ask whether the Church itself be not a figment? Are its foundations unreliable? are its aims illusory?

103. Observe first, the fact that many people live outside an Institution and even denounce it, is no proof that the Institution is a figment or that the people themselves are uninfluenced by it or could get on very well without it. Homeopathy has been called a figment, but its test methods and leading ideas have nevertheless profoundly modified the practice of orthodox medicine. We are no longer, thanks to the Homeopaths, bled for everything and drugged for nothing, in season and out of season. Mesmerism was another figment, but the whole of the mesmeric phenomena have been adopted by the anti-mesmeric men of science under the name of Hypnotism. Spiritualism is another figment, but people are beginning to see that some form of spiritualism underlies every kind of religion which has had, or is ever likely to have, any effect upon the world. And now if I go into "society" and I hear people scoffing at religious ideas, and sneering at noble principles, and shrugging their shoulders at Sacrifice, Generosity, Honour, and even Truth—professing only to live to eat, to drink, to indulge themselves and get rich or famous anyhow—and setting before them these as the real aims and objects of life and dismissing the aims and objects which the Church exists to keep alive, am I therefore bound to believe that such things as they despise are quite illusory and that the world can do very well

without them?—that the Church is, in a word, a figment, because it has unhappily put science in opposition by its ignorance, snubbed art and looked askance at culture, failed to commend its methods to the masses, and failed also to conciliate or charm a host of gabeys of the crutch-and-toothpick type who go in for what they call “a life of pleasure, don’t cher know”?

104. Alas ! the Church has been to blame no doubt—in all ages to blame, and in this age pitiably, pathetically to blame. When has she averted impending revolution ? In those transition periods of thought, of which the nineteenth century is amongst the greatest, when has the Church known the things which belong to her peace ? Not now, assuredly, any more than when Jesus wept over Jerusalem and bewailed the self-satisfied blindness and bigotry of the orthodox world of the period. And still the modern Church, though so like that old Church in that old world, is not a figment ; for, in spite of its blindness and its blundering, it stands, and always has stood, for Honour, Brotherhood, Generosity, Self-sacrifice, upward endeavour and aspiration ; and many who are most repelled by its ineptitudes, scandalised by its inconsistencies, and opposed to all recognised religious forms and beliefs, are nevertheless profoundly affected indirectly by the spirit and atmosphere of the Church and the Chapel. Winged seeds float from the continent of the Church and fertilise many a distant islet. The Church still radiates influence. The Churchgoers affect millions who go not to Church. The Church

transfuses and affects millions who will have directly nothing to do with her and her ministrations. And this because her foundations are safe, and the aims and objects and principles for which she stands are indispensable to the prosperity and even the very continuance of the race.

105. Now you might expect me to go no further back than Christianity, but the foundation of the Church universal, of which Christendom is the flower and the fruit, lies at the back of Christianity itself, deep-seated in all the ancient religions of the world.

106. The two key-notes—or “Leitmotiven,” to use Wagner’s phrase—of the Church universal are :

107. First key-note. BELIEF in a Power outside ourselves — (1) *moral*, which makes for Right ; (2) *affectional*, which has a regard for the Happiness of man.

108. Second key-note. THE FACT of an organisation of some kind embodying these beliefs, the recognition of them by an Institution, the formulation of them by a Doctrine, the appropriation of them by a Ritual—I say the Belief in such a Power, and the Fact of such an Institution embodying the belief, are of the essence of what may properly be called the Church universal, regarded as coextensive with the religious consciousness of the world—Greek, Roman, Asiatic, and Hebrew, polytheist or monotheist in all ages and climes.

109. We come now in addition to the special foundations of the Church of Christ.

110. The foundation of Christianity is CHRIST ; “other foundation can no man lay”. “The Church is founded on the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone.” “He hath made Him to be head over all things to the Church which is His Body.” The trumpet gives no uncertain sound. Is now this Church of Christ a figment? Is its base unreliable? Is its superstructure and frame-work artificial? Are its aims and objects visionary, its principles chimerical? To the figment theory of Christ's Church we oppose three realities—the REALITY OF DIVINE AUTHORITY, the REALITY OF PERSISTENT FORM, the REALITY OF REGENERATING POWER.

111. THE REALITY OF DIVINE AUTHORITY. We oppose to superstition and speculation alike the conviction that Christ was a *bona fide*, and authoritative revelator of what could be revealed of the Almighty God under the limitations of humanity: whether divine by pre-natal infusion or by post-natal transfusion, it concerns us not here to decide. So only the conviction remains that He did reveal God's nature and God's purpose to usward authoritatively; that God, who in times past had spoken variously through prophets, made once a special use of humanity, when He spoke to us by His Son,—so only this be secure, we have a real foundation for the Christian Church. This reality strikes at the root of Unitarianism, Socinianism, and

all kinds of mere Deism. AUTHORITATIVENESS is of the essence of CHRISTIANITY. That Jesus was divinely entitled to speak as He did—an hypothesis not rejected by the severe logician, J. S. Mill—gives supreme value to utterances which else would be simply blasphemous, such as, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God; believe also in Me," and "He who hath seen Me hath seen the Father," and "I am the bread that came down from Heaven," and so forth. The reasons for believing in the Reality of this Divine Authority have been copiously stated elsewhere.

112. They are derived from the correspondence of His words to our deepest needs; from the history of His Church—checkered as it is with frailty, and stained by crime, yet still a witness to those ultimate bonds of society, Brotherhood and Aspiration, which are the key-notes of the Christian Weal; and, lastly, a belief in this same Divine Authority of Jesus explains and arranges more facts in the soul of man and in the history of the world than any other; and, therefore, is to be held on purely logical grounds until some better hypothesis can be discovered. We do not think that the Spencerian or the Comtist philosophers have yet succeeded in inventing such a superior hypothesis. We, therefore, oppose the Reality of a Divine Authority to the figment theory of the Church of Christ.

113. THE REALITY OF PERSISTENT FORM. The organisation or organisations of Christ's Church have

lasted for the same objects—*i.e.*, in support of Honour, Generosity, Self-sacrifice, Aspiration, and general allegiance to Christ as divine, and the Christ Ideal of life as divine and ultimate—for nineteen hundred years, and certainly the Christian Church shows no signs of going to pieces, if we count the number, ever on the increase, of church and chapel spires and church functions, in all parts of the civilised world. We can trace the rise and progress of this figment (!) from a dozen or so of peasants led by the "Carpenter's Son," and appealing especially to the poor; from Democracy to Episcopacy; from Episcopacy to Church and State rule, under Constantine; from Church and State to a new differentiation, through schism, into rival Churches and nations, as at the Reformation; and, again, through heretical reform, back again into Democracy—witness the vast Nonconformist bodies throughout our land. But still the Church of Christ ever remains a Reality, having an outward organisation professing the Aims and Precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, and revolving round the person of Jesus Christ. This is the Reality of Persistent Form, which we oppose to the figment theory or alleged artificiality of the Christian superstructure.

114. THE REALITY OF REGENERATING POWER. We oppose an active, living power for good to the figment theory expressed in the words of the Maori chief, who, after listening to the missionary's explanation of Christianity, said, "*Me believe all dat big nonsense?*" As many others, after listening to the

ordinary pulpit ministrations, practically say very much the same thing, it is perhaps time to oppose to the figment theory this third Reality of Christ's Church, summed up in the words REGENERATING POWER. When a despised handful of men, coming of a despised nation of Eastern origin, proposed to overturn the Religions of the world, both East and West, and accordingly set out in the teeth of bitter opposition, without prestige, without wealth, without arms, and almost without organisation,—when they travelled as journeymen missionaries along the Roman roads, and were persecuted and killed off by the Emperors, both good and bad,—when, after successfully outrivalling the brilliant Flavian Stoics, who bid against them for ascendancy in Religion and moral reform, these Christian advocates managed somehow to weather the Antonine, Decian and Diocletian persecutions, and at last suddenly beheld the great Emperor of the East and West proclaim their despised Master "Lord of all Power and Might" (*ἐν τούτῳ νίκα*), and their persecuted faith the only true Religion,—at that thrilling moment, big with the destinies of European civilisation, when Constantine stood face to face and bowed himself before the assembled Bishops of Christendom, thus ratifying the first union between Church and State, the Church of Christ was not a figment! When the Imperial sceptre was trembling in the hands of feeble emperors, when Valentinus fled before Attila, when Honorius lay hid away in his palace at Ravenna, whilst Alaric and his barbaric hordes swept down upon the capital of the world in the fourth

century, and Innocent I. and later on, Leo I., stepped forth to meet the aggressors, made terms for the people, and over-awed the savages, a mere prelude to receiving the Teutonic races into the fold of the true faith, the Church of Christ was no figment. When the monks spread over Gaul, Spain, and Germany, clearing the forests, building shrines and monasteries, civilising, humanising, christianising an ignorant and awe-struck rabble, engaged mostly in internecine wars,—when under monastic influence, wildernesses and trackless jungles began to blossom like the rose, and peaceful homesteads sprang up as secure under the shadow of the monastery as ever the peasants had been beneath the walls of the feudal castle, which itself paid homage to the spiritual power, and when Augustine in the sixth century, landed on our shores, and came, chanting his litanies, before Ethelred and his queen, as they held their court on the chalk downs of the Isle of Thanet—what time the rude ships lay close up by Canterbury, before the sea had retired westward,—when, after having won the rude monarch's cautious assent, the foreign evangelists from Rome turned with cross and banner, still chanting their solemn litanies, and approached the wooden and mud structures which did duty for Canterbury, and Augustine, afterwards the first Archbishop of Canterbury, entered what ever since has been the Great Archiepiscopal see—the Church of Christ, the Church of England was then no figment. When Charlemagne, in the eighth century, found it expedient or necessary to receive his imperial crown at the hands of the Pope, in return for which, His

Holiness received grants of land which are claimed to this day (the present site of Santa Maria Maggiore amongst them), and when, for centuries afterwards, the Pope held the balance of power in Europe, the last shadow of which was reflected in the conciliatory and deferential spirit of Bismarck towards the Holy Father, and the coquetting of Her Majesty's Government with the papal emissaries on the Irish question; when, all through the middle ages, the Pope was able to play off one European nation against the other and exact professed deference from all the ruling sovereigns; when in the eleventh and twelfth centuries Lanfranc and Anselm and à Beckett alternately held the conscience and disputed the power of the English kings; when emperors held the Pope's stirrup and exposed their backs to flagellation at his commands, and when our own Henry II. did penance for the murder of Beckett,—when, as in Henry III.'s time, so great was the authority of the clergy that, as Mr. Lecky tells us, half of the Upper House were bishops and mitred abbots, the Church was assuredly no figment. But she exhibited at the English Reformation a still more astonishing proof of vitality. She showed that she could reform herself. She was so intimately in touch with the deepest thoughts and feelings of human nature, that she not only broke away from the old ecclesiastical frame-work of Rome and set up a separate one for herself; but her "Reform" acted most beneficially back on the old effete Catholicism and no doubt largely promoted the great Jesuit revival—that subtle mechanism of intellect and sentiment which was Rome's last serious

effort to bring herself into harmony with the requirements of an altered world. Luther, Calvin, abroad, Colet, Erasmus, Cranmer, at home, were no figments; no more was Loyola. But (*si monumentum quæris circumspice!*) least of all is the Church of Christ a figment in this land here and now. I remember Archbishop Tait in one of his most telling speeches at a large meeting of the Christian Knowledge Society, marshalling his statistics most effectively to show the enormous sums of money spent on the Church of England and also the vast amount spent on dissent. The Englishman, he said, showed his belief in the worth and importance of an agency by the amount he was willing to spend upon it, and he argued with great skill and weight that if we were guided by the safe criterion of £ s. d., we should come to the conclusion that the Englishman still thought that the Church of Christ in some form or other was the most real and valuable institution in the land. Indeed it seems so—church and chapel building is the one thing you can always get money for, and without much difficulty either. Go where you will, the first thing which meets your gaze is the church or chapel spire, dome, or shrine: St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey in London, St. Peter's at Rome, Notre Dame at Paris,—the Cathedrals old and new throughout the civilised world. At this moment, at this hour, think of the countless worshippers met in countless fanes, and all knit together in the worship of one God in Christ, all bearing witness to the peculiar aims and objects of that authoritative gospel which came down from Heaven.

115. Let us think of this. The authority that has thus shown itself divine, that stands amidst all changes for honour, generosity, self devotion, aspiration, and Christ-like humanity, that clothes itself persistently with the outward and visible, though changing form of a Holy Church throughout all the world, that penetrates slowly, but surely with its beneficent influence directly and indirectly all the peoples upon earth, that is an asylum for the sorrowful, a rest for the weary, and a well of water in the wilderness springing up unto eternal life for all who are ahungered and athirst after righteousness,—let us remember these things, and then, when we are told that the Church is a figment, its base unreliable, its superstructure unreliable, its aims chimerical—we may expect to feel our belief rising into that loving trust which is Faith, as with a new, almost passionate emphasis, we pronounce those old words: “I believe in the Holy Catholic Church”.



VIII.

“ARE THE CLERGY OBSOLETE?”

“*NO!*”

VIII.

116. Are the Clergy Obsolete? 117. A Common-sense Reply. 118. Five Questions. 119. The Power of the Priesthood. 120. The Church and the Family. 121. Patriarch v. Priest. 122. Routine. 123. The Weakness of the Priesthood. 124. The Prophet. 125. The Hireling. 126. The Ideal Priest. 127. The Priest's Ideal. 128. The Popular Sphere of the Priest. 129. John Baptist and the People. 130. Things fit for the Pulpit. 131. Preaching the Gospel. 132. The Priest a Representative. 133. From Moses to St. John. 134. Absolution. 135. All Priests unto God. 136. The Priestly Sphere of the People.



VIII.

"ARE THE CLERGY OBSOLETE?"

"NO!"

116. "*Are the Clergy obsolete?*"—A question which never would have been asked had the clergy adopted St. Paul's view, that they were not raised above the people "*to have dominion over their faith*" but to be "*Helpers of their joy*". The business of the Clergy is not, as the Holy Roman Inquisition opined, to make people say they believe what they don't or can't believe, or to force an authoritative statement of truth upon others, but rather so to present truth that it is felt to be, as Emanuel Deutsch says of the Talmud, "a comfort and a blessing". Not the things which we *are told we must* believe do us good, only those things which are so stated *that we cannot help believing them*—then truth is welcomed, not merely accepted, and those who are "*our servants for Christ's sake*," become "*helpers of our joy*". As it is, the Church has been called *a figment*; as it is, the Clergy have been called *obsolete*. The labour-masses, the Scientific world, the Art world, mostly give the go-by to the Church and the Clergy.

117. Nevertheless the Church and the Clergy go

on—why? Because there is that about both which is fundamental and transfusing; so that, as remarked before, numbers who repudiate both are nevertheless influenced, and even saturated by the principle for which both stand. Illustrations may be picked, but sometimes haphazard ones are the most telling. A tribute to the necessity and value of the clergy comes to us from a most unlikely quarter. The typical American Humourist has, as a rule, no tendency to over-estimate the value of the Christian minister, but here is what nevertheless escapes him.

“Air you a preacher?” asks someone of the famous showman. “No sir,” says the showman, “but I believe in morality—I likewise believe in meetin’-houses. Shew me a place where there is not any meetin’-houses, and where preachers is never seen, and I’ll shew you a place where old hats are stuffed into broken windows, where the children are dirty and ragged, where gates have no hinges, where the women are slip-shod and where maps of the devil’s wild land are printed on men’s shirt bosoms with tobacco juice—that’s what I’ll shew you. Let’s consider what the preachers do for us, sir, before we aboose them.”

118. Now let me place the ministerial function of the Priest and his mission on the best and surest foundations. I will ask first what is the *Power* or essential strength of all Priesthoods? Secondly, what is the *Weakness* of all Priesthoods? Thirdly, what is the *Ideal* of all Priesthood? Fourthly, what is the popular sphere of the *Priest*? Fifthly, what is the priestly sphere of the *People*?

119. First.—*The power of all Priesthoods.* The Priest is there to do something for the People—to minister to them in spiritual things. Constituted as we are we need such assistance. The priest is our

Representative, i.e., he does for us what each one is bound to do for himself. The Priest is there to help each one to pray for himself. He is a *Mediator*. He stands between God and man not to pose as indispensable to our meeting with God, but to enable us the better to meet Him in a world full of obstacles, and where there are "*many adversaries*". He is a *Teacher* and a *Preacher*. He utters and formulates truth for our instruction and comfort. He is also when at his highest, a *Seer* and a *Prophet*—he has then that intense moral perception which constitutes a kind of open vision. He is credited with a certain spiritual lift, which raises him above the things of earth, and fills him for a season with the mighty passions of eternity. Representative, Mediator, Teacher, Priest, Prophet and Seer, such in ideal combination is the true "*Minister*" who is to be the "*helper of our joy*". He is needed, never more needed than now. Let us see what he has been in the past.

120. The Germ of the Church with its Priest and Prophet, like the germ of the State with its rulers and overseers, is to be found in the Family. That is what makes Church and State (not always in union, but) always Fundamental. That is why the Church can never be a figment, nor the Clergy obsolete.

121. In Patriarchal, as in early Christian times, the Priest, or *Presbyter*, was simply the father of the family, or *Elder*, in the house. In Abraham and Jacob, Priest and Prophet were one ; both sacrificed

(Priestly), both revealed or spoke divine decrees (Prophetical). Such words as "*me and my house*" stamp the head of the family as leading the family worship. "*Thou shalt teach them* (the divine statutes and judgments) *diligently to thy children*," stamps the father again with another priestly function. "*Job sent and sanctified his sons and daughters when they feasted, and offered sacrifices for them*." (There the father appears as mediator, another priestly function.) The far off echo of those times seems to reach us in certain other familiar words, which, in the earliest Christian times, treat the Church and Clergy as a kind of family institution—"The Church which is in the House of Stephanas," "The Church which is in the House of Chloe".

122. Although in even post-Patriarchal times the Priest and Prophet met in the persons of such seers as Samuel and David, yet they were more often separate (the Levitical Priesthood emphasises the separation), as in the case of Aaron, Eli, Zadok, and Priest and Prophet were not seldom in antagonism, as in the case of Isaiah and Malachi and the contemporary Priesthood, or as in the case of the Divine Prophet of Nazareth and Caiaphas. In antagonism and why? Because an institution developed on a large scale out of separate nuclei as the Church out of the family necessarily involves machinery, organisation, ROUTINE, which three useful things begin by serving life and end by crushing it.

123. And this brings me secondly to the *weakness*

of all Priesthoods. It is the curse of *Routine* that it saps life. It is at once a curse and a blessing—a blessing, because it provides a vehicle for the Religion of the masses ; a curse, because it tends to centre and arrest attention upon the accidentals of Religion. It mistakes outward forms and functions, whose only merit is that they point beyond themselves to the life and the power which first called them forth, but which they habitually stifle. When Priestly functions—Sacraments, Penances, Confessions, vain repetitions—come to be worshipped and to do duty for the “*clean Heart*” and the “*right Spirit*” and the fervent Life,—

124. Then arises the PROPHET. Isaiah will have none of the new moons, Malachi none of the hired Priests, and Christ cannot away with the “*Corban*” and “tithe of mint, anise, and cummin”. And as it was with the Jewish Church, so it was with the Roman Church, and afterwards with the Protestant Church ; and Luther cannot away with the Pope and all his works, and Wesley, and Whitfield, and Romaine cannot away with the dry Episcopal Church that has the “form of godliness, denying the power thereof” ! And every revival within the Church has sounded the same note of holy revolt against the established order grown dead or false to its spiritual trust, and the great surging ocean of tumultuous Dissent, itself outside the Established Church, is none other than the long-stifled cry of the nation’s conscience hungering and thirsting after righteousness

and bearing witness to a living spirit held in the frozen death grip of an ecclesiastical dead letter.

125. At this very moment has not the Church of England's Priesthood grown weak? and is not the Church bitterly unfaithful now as ever in neglecting or ignoring the prophetic element, which should animate her Clergy—or, at least, be respected by their chief Priests and rulers? *Why does a young man go into the Church of England?* Because he is the fool of the family. If he cannot get sixpence a day in any other profession, then we put him into the Priest's office, in order that "*he may eat a morsel of bread*"! *Why does a young man go into the Church?* Because he is the youngest son of a Peer, and there is a family living, or his father can buy the advowson. He may care for nothing but horses, he might have done well in business, or even dabbled in art or trifled with music, and got pushed in the direction of his tastes or talents, such as they are—but, no; the Church is handy, the Church is respectable, and the round man is fixed in the square hole, for better, for worse—certainly not for the glory of God, and not for the good of man. *Why does a man go into the Church?* Because he gets a step up in life. He wants to shake off trade, and sink the honest Buttermilk in the pretentious Parson! But 'tis an ignoble thing to exploit a sacred calling because you are ashamed of an honest one. *Why does he go into the Church?* Because he wants to retain a college fellowship, or get a college living, or reach some academical post for which Holy orders are *de rigueur*! So men are made Priests

because they can do mathematics, and Bishops because they can teach the dead languages. Who was that Bishop who regretted only one thing on his death-bed: that he had "not devoted the whole of his life to the dative case"? These be your gods, O Israel!

126. But, lastly, the ideal Priest is he who combines in most perfect proportion the ministerial and prophetic functions. The world and the Church are full of broken lights. A man is eloquent, but he is not devout; able, but not spiritual; clever, but without character; good, but without brains; or intellectually and morally excellent, but without that personal magnetism which rules and moulds, transfuses and transforms the souls of others. But the high Priests who are ministerial and prophetic in one stand out upon the mountain-tops of the Ages. There is no mistaking them. It is Paul, the prisoner, who, in the terror of the storm, says to the trembling crew of Greek sailors and Roman soldiers: "*Sirs, be of good cheer. I pray you, take some meat.*" There shall not one hair of your head perish." It is Gregory the Great who, in the midst of the Roman Pestilence, marshalls the people in troops, and sends them chanting litanies through the streets until the paralysis of fear is lifted and reviving courage is symbolised by an angelic appearance hovering over the fortress of Hadrian. It is Luther who steps forth boldly to liberate the people from the spiritual thralldom of Rome, what time the rough-mailed Baron pats him on the shoulder as he goes alone into the Diet of Worms to confront

the ranged forces of the Pope and Roman Catholic orthodoxy. "Courage, little Monk!" says the Baron; "speak the truth." Yes; they needed some one to speak out what was in all hearts, and formulate their confused thoughts for them. They needed such a Priest and Prophet in one; and the world will always need such men. They never can be obsolete: they answer the cry of the human spirit; they come, like delivering Avatars, when they are wanted. Sometimes they are great confessors, like the Curé d'Ars, who drew all France to a remote village in Brittany. Sometimes they are philosophers, like F. D. Maurice; or spiritual thinkers, like Newman; or poets, like Keble; or tender-hearted, kind, good men, gifted with natural eloquence, mother wit, and the justest perception of the practical needs of the human heart, like C. H. Spurgeon.

127. Such are the men, who, if they do not always resist the temptation of "*having dominion over our faith*," know well how to be "*helpers of our joy*"—not men of head, but men of heart, always having their lips touched with a coal from the altar,—and they are not many, as St. Paul with a certain tenderness and yearning altogether Pauline, reminds his dear, troublesome, and very mixed Corinthians—"Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers". Happy is the man who is not only set apart by authority, but also called by the Spirit—who has both knowledge and grace, and happy are they who have such an one to be a helper of their joy.

128. THE POPULAR SPHERE OF THE PRIEST. I have treated this point elsewhere (*vide* "*Thoughts for the Times on Preaching*"). I will but briefly allude to it here. Whenever a clergyman alludes to Politics, Social Problems, Amusements, Art, Literature, or Science, in the pulpit,—he is told to confine himself to his proper sphere, and "*preach the Gospel*". But the sphere of the Gospel ministry is co-extensive with life : it is world-wide and human, or it is nothing. Jesus says "Come unto Me *all*". "But," it is said, "the clergyman is a man of prayer, a man of books; he should live out of the world." "No," replies Jesus, he should live *in the world*, and yet not be *of the world* in the sense of being driven and controlled by its meaner currents, ambitions, and lusts. But a sympathetic intelligence he must have. He too must know what is in man and be in touch with all life—not in the sense of touching pitch, with the inevitable consequences—but in the sense of reading the human heart and feeling by quick intuition, the ways and the works of men and women, as Christ felt them. Then and then alone, can he be true Friend, Councillor, Helper of joy, and Evangelist.

129. Secular and Religious spheres need not be confused, but every secular sphere becomes religious when it infringes on the moral and spiritual plane. All sorts and conditions of men flocked to John, the man of the desert. He might not be acquainted with the occupations and pursuits of the multitudes who resorted to him, but he knew many of them were selfish and grasping, and his counsel of charity

and largess was never more in place than when he said to the mixed multitude in the wilderness: "*He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none, and he that hath meat, let him do likewise*". He might not know much about tax collecting and finance, but, "*Exact no more than that which is appointed to you,*" was not bad advice to collectors of the Revenue—past and present. He might not know the details of war, but "*Do violence to no man, and be content with your wages,*" were very apt words to address to the Roman soldiers, who were always tempted to grumble at the government and use their power over civilians for purposes of extortion.

130. So in these days, whenever Politics infringe on the moral plane—whether it be a question of justice to Ireland, party corruption, or ambitious war—Politics are for the pulpit. Whenever Science draws inferences seemingly inimical to, or at variance with, social morality or spiritual experience—whether it be Darwin, Herbert Spencer, or Huxley—Science is fit subject-matter for the pulpit. Whenever a book with a false thrust, like Tolstoi's "*Kreutzer Sonata*," or a disastrous theology like "*John Ward, Preacher*," or replete with plausible misconceptions like "*Robert Elsmere*," or "*Joshua Davidson*" absorbs the public attention, then Literature, even Romance literature becomes fit for the pulpit.

131. Whenever Pictures like the naturalistic French pictures, which annually excite criticism in the Paris Salon, come up for discussion at the Bar of Public

Feeling, moral or immoral art is a question for the pulpit. Whenever a vocation like the actor's, or an Institution like the Music Hall—whenever an Immoral "Corner," or a big "Ring," or a group of Bubble Companies, or a swindling Trade, or any other secular affair—comes up for judgment, or invites public attention, why certainly the Clergy should have something to say about these matters in the pulpit. There have been times no doubt when the Priests have kept silence, but we must remember that they brought down on their heads the sharp rebuke of the Prophet—"His Watchmen are blind; they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark". Let not the preacher be warned off his public and human sphere by the cry of a clap-trap as shallow as it is insincere about *preaching the Gospel*. If the pagan philosopher could say "*nihil humani alienum a me puto*," how much more should the minister of Christ claim the world of human life, "with all its lights and shadows, all the wealth and all the woe," as a fit subject for the control of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

132. The Priestly sphere of the People follows from the view which has been here taken of the nature of the Christian Priest. The Priest is Representative. He is not a substitute or a "*deus ex Machina*" of any kind.

133. "*Would to God*," said Moses, "*that all the Lord's People were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them*;" and in the last book of the Bible the Priestly character of Human Nature is

asserted with even greater emphasis, for we are told that Jesus Christ has made us all "*kings and Priests unto God*".

134. Even the supposed Priestly power of Absolution is by St. Paul delegated to the Christian community. To whom "*ye forgive anything I forgive also,*" and "*I forgive it in the Person of Christ,*" as "*Son of Man*". Yes; it is the *Son of Man* who has power to forgive sins. Precious and neglected truth! Awful responsibility of binding and loosing from sin! How true it is, that by simply forgiving men, we lift their sin and help them to a fresh start! How true it is, that by branding men and women with their past offences, we rivet upon them chains of vice and misery from which a kind word, a helping hand, a gentle oblivion, a Christian heart-beat, would have forever set them free! "*Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them!*" was spoken not to any Apostolic caste, but to the Disciples, when "*He breathed upon them, and said, receive ye the Holy Ghost*"; and, as the gift of the Holy Spirit is free and open to all, so is the Priestly power of Absolution vested in all Christian people—if they did but know it, and would but use it.

135. We do too little for each other as Priests: we *pray* too seldom for and with one another; we teach and preach too little; often a prayer would be gratefully accepted by one too weak to pray for himself; and you—banker, lawyer, doctor, tradesman, artisan—might be the unassuming Priest. Some people have

difficulty in formulating prayer ; others have a gift—let them use it more frankly, simply, kindly. They are “*all priests unto God*” by right. Would to God all the Lord’s people were so verily and indeed !

136. And some of us might use on occasion the Priestly and consoling gift of spiritual *teaching* much more often than we do. Tell a brother or sister in doubt what *you* believe ; tell one in trouble what has comforted *you* ; tell one in bitter loss and pain what relief and compensation *you* have found in such thoughts, such prayers, such convictions ; tell others what *you* feel or even *know* to be true about a life after Death—why ? what conviction, and hope, and faith would you generate ? Only, let what you thus preach be genuine—something you have really felt and known. In the heart’s loneliness no *shibboleth* will keep it company—no religious commonplace ; nothing but heart can minister to heart ; and the Priestly function of the People, in so far as it deals with teaching or preaching, consists simply in placing our own spiritual beliefs and experiences at the disposal of our brother who may need them for his comfort, establishment and edification. “*Come hither and I will show you what God hath done for my soul ;*” “*I was in misery, and He helped me*”. That is the kind of lay preaching which is effective ; would there were a little more of it !. Apart from all cant and self-consciousness, the Priestly sphere of the People might be much more widely recognised and developed, and our ill-timed reticence cast aside on occasion, greatly to the solace and enrichment of the Christian community.

IX.

“ARE THE SAINTS INTELLIGIBLE?”

“*YES!*”

137. The Common Notion of Saint. 138. The True Saint. 139. Two Keys. 140. Three Characteristics. 141. The Test of History. 142. St. Simeon Stylites. 143. A Noble Reaction—Not a Rule of Life. 144. St. Cuthbert. 145. St. Bernard. 146. St. Francis d'Assisi. 147. St. Francis de Sales. 148. The Saintly Vocation, the Saintly Spirit.



IX.

“ARE THE SAINTS INTELLIGIBLE?”

“YES!”

137. What is a Saint? One who is holy. What is holiness? Holiness is more than correctness of life, or rightness; it is an additional sense of union, or a certain loving and reverent perception of affinity with the Source of all rightness, and as a consequence the harmonisation, balance and elevation of the entire man—body, mind, and spirit. The common notion of saint is defective. It is the “*touch not, taste not, handle not*” ideal, the superb and ascetic exaggeration of one side, the spiritual, meditative, intuitional side of our being, coupled with the ruinous degradation and persecution of the other side, which responds to nature and environment; the emaciated creatures which gaze at us sadly from mediæval canvasses, or flame out for a moment from stained glass windows with mystic radiance, flouting a world of alien hopes and fears and pleasures—this is the common ideal of sainthood, which is more and more becoming unintelligible. It may be interpreted—explained—*placed* in history, even justified,—but it is not generally imitable or intelligible now; and it is not Christ’s sainthood?

138. All Christian ideals short of the fulness of Christ, are chained and bound, defective, one-sided, warped, and incomplete. Even Paul felt this when he said ye are "*complete in Him*," and in no other as far as I can see. Even Paul was a little warped. Though he made a great effort to be fair to the claims of the body and the legitimate desires of the mind, yet could he not discover that "*in his flesh dwelt any good thing*". The Greek games he indeed looked on at, and wove their incidents into a parable of the Christian life ; but he was quite blind to Greek Art, ignored or shuddered at the masterpieces of Phidias in the Parthenon, and went through the Roman Empire at the acme of its splendour, from Jewry to Jewry, with his eyes shut. His tribute to marriage was honest, but half-hearted. His indifference to, though not contempt of, the senses was very conspicuous : not Paul's worst enemies would have called him "*a gluttonous man and a wine bibber*"; his enjoyment of natural things lent no colouring to such a phrase. He was not partial to merry throngs. We never hear of the children being fond of him ; unlike Jesus, he seldom alludes to children. Feasts were evidently not in his line and he seems to have taken little part or interest in secular affairs. He was far more human and all-round than the received type of ascetic saint ; but far less so than Jesus. Jesus alone was free and universal, and balanced in body, mind, and spirit, without a bar in His nature, full of sweetness, geniality, and divine insight. To be a true saint is not to be like St. Simeon Stylites, or even like Paul, but it is to be like Jesus ; no strange Being, at war

with all things secular, but still a being lifted up in pure energy and perfect balance—"in the world, yet not of the world". Sainthood as suggested by Jesus, and Sainthood as reproduced in varying degrees and altered proportions by His disciples, are certainly very different things ; but the varying types of Saint-hood, because they aim at being Christ-like, have a unity deeper than all superficial diversities.

139. There are two keys which will unlock for us, and make completely intelligible the *Saint* under whatever disguise he may appear, enabling us to trace back unerringly his spiritual descent to Christ Jesus who is the one perfect type of all true human life. The first key to Sainthood is the recognition of a characteristic spiritual order heated by unearthly enthusiasm, which at times amounts to an anticipation of heaven, so irradiated is it by the intense consciousness of a spiritual universe. The second key will be found in the study of History, that is to say, in a sympathetic recognition of the (in one word) *Zeitgeist* of each age, which will help us to understand why the Saint was what he was, when he was, where he was, and how it was he could not well have been anything different from what he was.

140. Three characteristics of spiritual order mixed in varying proportions, but always recurrent, distinguish the Saintly type in all ages and beneath all disguises. They are briefly these : The passion of Morals ; The passion of Man, or as the author of "*Ecce Homo*" calls it, "Enthusiasm of Humanity,"

and the passion of God. The world wants all these things and we want them always. The Saintly type, so far from being out of date, can never, under any conceivable circumstances, be an anachronism. Morals are absolutely indispensable. The Goodwill of man to man is for ever in demand above any actual supply, whilst the recognition of a spiritual world, a firm belief and loving trust in a Sovereign and Divine Will in common with ours is just that one thing needful to give a lift to all upward endeavour, and a stability to all human effort for good. The saintly character then is absolutely solid. Its foundations are as impregnable as those of the Church or the Priesthood. When all semblance of sainthood disappears, when all memory of the Christ Ideal fades out of the world, then human society will fall back into the chaos of barbarism, out of which it has been so painfully lifted. The disappearance of those qualities for which sainthood stands (and which were manifested in broken lights long before Christianity dawned), means the dissolution of that cement which binds the social atoms together. Meanwhile the Saint has his special functions in the world; qualities scattered about in the masses are seen concentrated and condensed in him. As vague art and literary instincts are all about, but are brightly focused in the Painter, Musician or Poet, so moral perception—benevolence—spirituality—are all about, but become focused and condensed in the life of the Saint. The Saints are thus seen to be reservoirs of radiating moral and spiritual wealth, held as it were in trust for the whole world. They are the great inspirational sources of all the higher activities

and all the spiritual gifts. We are told that there was one who "*ascended up on high and led captivity captive and received gifts for men*". Well, this is precisely what the Saints do each according to the measure of the grace that is in him. Therefore the foundations of Sainthood are upon the everlasting Hills.

141. Before tracing in some representative cases of Sainthood the characteristics which I have signalled as belonging to them all, let me allude once more to the key of history, which can alone unlock in detail the lives of the Saints, which will show why such glaringly and apparently opposed personalities as St. Simeon Stylites and St. Francis de Sales, Dr. Newman and Charles Kingsley ; Frederick Denison Maurice and the Curé d'Ars, were so different outwardly and so alike inwardly. Just as a number of vials holding what looks like very different mixtures will be made to betray the presence of a certain essence common to them all, simply by the introduction of a few drops of test liquid, so we have but to apply the historical test to each Saint, and each one will suddenly show the same fundamental colour.

142. For instance St. Simeon Stylites is a figure at first not only absolutely unintelligible, but vastly repugnant and odious to the nineteenth century feeling about the *τὸ πρέπον*. Here was a man who in the fifth century turned his back upon every form of human activity. In filthy neglect and maltreatment of his body he seems to have exceeded every recorded instance of

abstinence and mortification. For thirty-seven years he lived on the tops of pillars—the last pillar being forty cubits high—the top of this pillar was about three feet in diameter, so that he could never sit down. All day he kept bowing himself up and down in prayer when he was not exhorting the people who flocked to see him ; some one counted twelve hundred and forty-four reverences, and then gave over completely worn out. One day he seemed to have been for so long in prayer that all men thought him asleep ; at last some one climbed up and found that he had been for some time dead. Persians, Iberians and Armenians flocked to see him. Princes and Queens from Arabia made pilgrimages to consult him, the Emperors Theodosius and Leo often took his advice and sought his prayers. His miracles were said to be innumerable and wondrous. The Patriarch of Antioch, Domnus, came all the way to administer the sacrament to him on his column. His austerities were frightful. He lived as it were on one side of his body, which was a mass of sores through his terrible disciplines—and this was the ideal saint of the sixth century ! Beneath this insane manifestation of apparently perverse imbecility, it may be difficult at first to decipher the invariable and crucial characteristics of sainthood as I have defined them—but they are all there, passion for Morals, passion for Man, passion for God. A careful perusal of Tennyson's immortal poem of *St. Simeon Stylites* will quicken in us more than any prose narrative, that historical imagination which can alone enable us to regard this wondrous figure with intelligence and even sympathy. The monstrous sensuality

and corruption of Alexandria, Corinth and Rome, lent immense force to the example of a man who could so utterly crush the offending senses, his eager solicitude for the masses who thronged about his pillar of pain, betrayed the presence of his burning and irresistible love and pity for man, whilst his exalted and rapturous devotion convinced all beholders that he lived habitually in close and conscious communion with God.

143. But the Ascetic Sainthood of Stylites, although embracing, as it undoubtedly does the three characteristics of true Sainthood, is defensible only as a noble reaction and becomes intelligible only after an appeal to history. It was suited to a particular age; it may be fitted in principle, and for a time, to any individual whose self-indulgence or unruly appetite may need the severe curb of total abstinence or painful discipline. As a rule of life it has been tried over and over again, and has always ended in defeating its own objects, for it ends invariably either in a wild outburst of abnormal sensuality, as is seen in the corruptions of the monastic life, or else in that perversion of nature which culminates in liking and even having a sort of mania for dirt, flagellation, tears, vigils, and garbage,—to learn to love all which things is not necessarily better but it is distinctly less natural than to love their opposites. The cheat which the Ascetic practises upon himself is to believe that when he has perverted his tastes he is a conspicuous instance of self-control and self-sacrifice. The very opposite would be nearer the truth, for to wash and be clean would

be his real penance. The rule is this, that whatever you accustom the body to do, in the long run the body will like to do it. To control your body, to do what is right is noble ; but to pervert your senses, to like what is disagreeable is neither meritorious nor natural. It is only meritorious when it helps you to resist what is wrong ; it is only natural when it is a blow struck at the lower nature for the sake of something higher. But penances practised by themselves out of a notion that in themselves they are meritorious instead of a mere means to an end, defeat their own objects. Sacrifice indeed in any intelligible or worthy sense such Asceticism is not, and sometimes it looks more like a perverted form of self-indulgence. There is abundant evidence to show that after a time the body responds not unpleasurably to the stimulus of flagellation—that to a man accustomed to a spare diet a full meal is nauseating ; the results on the ascetic Curé d'Ars when persuaded by a wealthy Abbot to have a good dinner were, so the Abbot tells us, so distressing that he never attempted to repeat the experiment. Garibaldi from long habit preferred a flagon of the coarsest red wine of the country to the finest Champagne. A cold bath is as much a luxury to one person as it is a discipline to another. To sleep out of doors in a rude hut would to some appear a hardship, but Livingstone and Gordon infinitely preferred it. The hospital nurse dislikes nothing so much as a long unbroken night : she has trained her body to sleep by snatches ; and no doubt the monks who rose frequently for prayer did the same, and would have missed the bell and the hurrying down

out of their dark dormitories into the chapel before daylight. Tears may above all things be thought penitential, but the phrase, "*a good cry*," is neither unknown nor unintelligible to some people and the weeping virgins of Pepusa, the gift of tears boasted of by St. Francis and other Saints may have sailed perilously near pleasurable or sensual emotion; from all which things we infer that St. Simeon is not generally fit for imitation, but that he was great and in place, because he proclaimed in a manner strikingly congenial to his age, an obscured and neglected truth, viz., the solitary supremacy of Mind over Matter, of the spirit over the flesh (the same is true of "Christian Science" teachers—this is their power); because he overstated, as all reformers overstate, what had been understated, and so struck a mighty blow on the side of morals, man, and God. Whilst then Asceticism as an historical reaction, or as a personal discipline, may fitly belong to essential Sainthood, Asceticism as a rule of life and pursued as meritorious in itself is one of the worst blunders endorsed by the Church, and one of the greatest corruptions which has disfigured and disguised the Religion of Jesus. Let us now look at some other types of Sainthood and notice how they will in turn respond to the given tests of Sainthood and make for that Moral Sense, Benevolence and Spirituality which are the Saintly characteristics and the heavenly pabulum of the World.

144. We could hardly find a greater contrast to St. Simeon than St. Cuthbert. A Northumberland

shepherd boy (607-85) smitten with the mystic light of Christianity caught from such venerable figures as Cædda, the Monk of Lindisfarne, and Bishop Aidan, whose soul had lately been borne heavenward by white angels—Cuthbert early devoted himself to the religious life, and wandered, with a burning, yet withal homely and genial zeal, as a self-appointed missionary amongst the rude groups of log huts which had arisen round the Mission-station of Melrose. He traversed the wild bogs and mountain tracks of Northumbria—preaching far and wide the elementary truths of the ten commandments and the sermon on the mount. He was beloved because he loved much. He was revered because it was felt that he lived and moved in the presence of a higher power. “Look,” he said to his starving companions, “at the eagle overhead—God can feed us through him if He will”—and it is recorded that the eagle dropped a fish it was carrying at the Saint’s feet. On another occasion his brethern were in imminent peril. “The snow closes the road along the shore,” cried some; “The storm bars our way over sea,” wailed the others, but with one of his buoyant smiles the Saint pointed to the sky: “There is still the way of heaven that lies open”. Before the advancing tide of the irresistible Papal power the independent church of the north, of which Cuthbert was the brightest surviving ornament, dwindled slowly but steadily. He had more than once thrown down the reins of monastic government in despair at the monks’ bickerings and dissensions; yet before his death he was summoned to the Bishopric of Lindisfarne, which he held for a short time,

but he returned to the solitude of Holy Isle after the slaughter by the Picts of the English at Nechtansmere (685 A.D.), and died with words of foreboding, yet "of concord and peace," upon his lips, not however until the rugged north had been well ploughed by the workers of Melrose, Lindisfarne and Holy Isle for the more fruitful seed which the genius of Rome was about to sow. St. Cuthbert harmonised with his age, nor is it hard to discern in his ceaseless preaching, his passion for morals, in his genial companionship, his love for man, and in his prayer and meditation his spiritual nearness to God.

145. St. Bernard, 1153 A.D., was a very different type of man, being endowed with a commanding intellect, and as much at home in kings' courts as in the cloistered seclusion of Cluny or Clairvaux. He was behind none of his predecessors in the bodily austerities and fasts which seem in those days to have been the most admired and convincing proofs of sincere religion. As a young man he professed to find "a prison in cities, and a paradise in solitude," but his example was so irresistibly attractive that he was followed by all the members of his family, and seems never to have been without the enthusiastic companionship of disciples who hung upon his lips and insisted upon placing themselves under his guidance. His chief sustenance was coarse bread softened in warm water. It is written that all the time which he spent in contemplation seemed short to him, and he found every place convenient for that exercise. He did not interrupt it in the midst of company, conver-

sing in his heart always with God. It could not much matter where such a man was. He lived for some time at Cluny, but never refused to go into camps, or courts, or revolutionary mobs if he could help men to peace or promote the glory of God. His personal ascendancy was so great that the Emperor Lothaire was forced to yield to his opinion on the question of investiture of Bishoprics; and Barbarossa, Henry V., and Lothaire II. all came at different times under his personal influence. Popes urged upon him one after another the chief sees in Christendom, but the saint in his extreme humility resisted even with tears and entreaties all their splendid offers. He sallied forth at times from his monastery at Clairvaux to reprove scandalous evil livers like William of Guiyenue, and seldom failed in his mission. He was a great pacificator of churches and umpire of ecclesiastical disputes. Suffering from his last illness at the age of sixty-three he travelled to Metz in order to reconcile certain turbulent princes, and restore peace to that distracted city. This was in 1153, the year of his death. Of Bernard it is written by one who knew him: "His discourse is everywhere sweet and ardent, it so delighteth and fervently inflameth that from his most sweet tongue honey and milk seem to flow in his words, and out of his most ardent breast a fire of burning affections breaks forth". Erasmus says of him: "Bernard is cheerful, pleasant, and vehement in moving the passions". It is not difficult to see how the passion of Morals, the passion of Man, and the passion of God were in St. Bernard blended into a

unity irresistibly attractive and convincing to the age in which he lived.

146. St. Francis d'Assisi presents again a somewhat different type. Born in easy circumstances at Assisi in 1226, the youth early came under those temperamental influences which stamped his whole inner life with prayer and meditation. Yet he was incessantly and restlessly active, often building chapels and log-huts with his own hands. Having attracted a band of devoted followers, it was decided that prayer, meditation and penance were not to be their only occupations. To be Christ-like, a tender love and pity for all men was needful; and those who prayed best were bound to work most for others. The Saint showed this by parting with his food and clothing to the poor, and sallying forth to preach far and wide and win souls. After drawing up a rule of poverty and discipline for himself and his companions, he went to Rome, and at last succeeded in getting the assent and approval of Pope Innocent the III. to the organisation of his Fraternity, afterwards known as the Franciscans or Minorites—the *Fratres minores*. So great was his humility that he would only claim the title of *minores* for himself and his disciples. He never would take Priest's orders, feeling himself unworthy. (Let Father Ignatius, who cannot get the Bishops to ordain him Priest, take comfort from this.) His inward experiences must have been wonderful. He seems to have habitually been surrounded by angels, and especially in communion with a bright, seraphic being, through whom Jesus Christ made

himself personally known to him. At such times his devoted disciple Leo dared not disturb him. He used to come to the door and say, *Domine, labia mea aperias* ("Lord, open thou my lips"), and unless the Saint answered, *Et os meum annuntiabit laudem tuam* ("And my mouth shall show forth thy praise"), he was not to enter. St. Francis founded many monasteries: the *Minories* in London retains the memory of one. Whilst severe with those under his rule, he was also most reasonable and loving; and once, when a brother could not sleep for fasting, the Saint brought him food, and ate with him that he might not feel ashamed. He had a pleasant wit, and called his vile body "*brother Ass*," because it required so much belabouring and discipline; an idle fellow he called "*brother Fly*," because he was not only idle himself, but spoiled and hindered the work of others. When he had to be cauterised he besought "*brother Fire*" to be gentle with him, that he might be able to bear the pain. He was deeply burned from ear to jaw, but felt no pain. The *stigmata*, or the prints of the nails and the red spear-wound in his side, are attested on such evidence as would amply suffice for any alleged fact of a less extraordinary character; as also the Saint's frequent levitations during prayer—an experience which spiritualistic phenomena have made some of us familiar with. His disciple Leo declared that on one occasion St. Francis rose so high that he was only just able to touch and kiss the soles of his feet. After a life of ceaseless activity, burning love, and the most marvellous spiritual exaltation, St. Francis, at

the early age of forty-six, worn out prematurely by his own singular austerities, died at Assissi. Feeling the end approaching, he ordered himself to be laid on the ground, with a coarse sack to cover him, and gave orders that his body should be buried outside the town amongst the graves of common malefactors. Then, after listening to the account of our Lord's Passion in St. John, he repeated from the Psalm, "*Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Thy name,*" and "*The just wait for me till Thou reward me,*" and so died. His rule of Poverty became popular throughout Christendom, and provided Rome with an excellent lever. It was also the very antidote needed for a Church going fast down hill through a surfeit of wealth, luxury and power. St. Francis thus proved himself the man of his age: a healthy product of his time, and an appropriate embodiment, in his turn, of saintly Morals, Benevolence and Spirituality.

147. St. Francis de Sales differs in some material respects from any of the foregoing. He is commonly supposed to be more like Jesus in the general tone and atmosphere of his life and mind than any other saint in the calendar. He had not the statesman's mind like Bernard, or the consummate power of organisation like St. Francis of Assissi, nor the fanatical asceticism of Stylites. There is truly nothing fanatical about him; in adopting humility, in affecting simplicity, though not abject poverty and in practising penances, he did but conform to what, in those days, were the recognised symbols of the religious life as a vocation; but that he had the

characteristic qualities of Sainthood in the highest measure is certain. Born of noble parents in 1622, he early showed his sensitive moral nature by his abhorrence of a lie. These ideas were instilled into him by his mother, who said to him : " I had rather see you dead than convicted of a crime ". At eighteen, he seems to have passed through a spiritual crisis which left him after many weeks of prayer and tears in the serene and exalted, yet withal sweetly reasonable and happy frame of mind which gave its peculiar tone to the rest of his life. His manners were as became a scion of nobility, polished and charming, whilst his gentleness and humility won all hearts, especially when they were seen to be combined with unswerving strictness of life and the most tireless zeal for the souls and tenderness for the bodies of all sinners and sufferers. Soon after entering the ministry he founded the confraternity of the Holy Cross—the brethren binding themselves to instruct the ignorant, comfort and relieve the sick, and avoid lawsuits and quarrels of all kinds. There must have been something exceedingly magnetic and fascinating in his personality : men, sent to Geneva to assassinate him, became suddenly his converts, the rough soldiers yielded to his irresistible charm, the rich and influential everywhere crowded to hear him ; but he had far more delight in going amongst the Alpine villages and preaching to the poor. On one occasion, after he had been raised to the Bishopric of Geneva, the Parliament, to whom he had given some offence, seized upon his temporalities ; he merely thanked them for reminding him that the wealth of a Bishop

should be altogether spiritual (all Popes please copy). When he preached before Henry IV. at Paris, princes and cardinals fought for standing room, and some duchesses of the court made him up a purse full of gold. He courteously admired the embroidery of the purse, but returned it with the gold, as he had no use for it, saying, as he had said to Henry IV. when he declined the offer of one of the richest abbeys in France, that the less he possessed, the less he would have to account for. When he went to Paris, his health was already broken, but he insisted on preaching twice a day—that, he said, was his vocation. The crowds that sought access to the church of André des Arcs seemed never to have enough of him. The Bishop of Bellay interposed for the sake of his health; the Saint replied it was easier for him to preach twice than to invent an excuse for not preaching once; but he added, “I wonder that the people in this great city flock so eagerly to hear me: my tongue is slow, my conceptions commonplace, my style prosy, as you can bear witness”. “Do you think,” replied the Bishop, “that rhetoric is what they look for in you? it is enough for them to see you enter the pulpit, your heart shines through your countenance. Were you only to say a *Pater Noster* with them it would suffice. Your commonest words burn with the fire of charity which pierces and melts all hearts. I know not what extraordinary power there is in you which makes every word strike deep: you have said everything—when you have said nothing.” The saint smiled indulgently and turned the conversation. It is impossible in reading these words not to remem-

ber the impression made upon the great pulpit orator, Lacordaire, by the inspired simplicity of the poor Curé d'Ars, or the thrilling effect produced by Frederick Denison Maurice, simply by his devout way of *praying* the Lord's Prayer. I remember Joseph Sortain's repetition of the collect he invariably used before his sermon, produced upon me a similar impression: "*Blessed Lord who has caused all holy scriptures to be written for our learning*". St. Francis was the most lovable of all the Saints, personally he was doubtless ascetic in his habits, but he was certainly no recluse—he was incessantly travelling and everywhere overflowing with deeds of love and mercy, stripping himself to the shirt for the poor he met by the way. His admirable books, "*The Spirit of Francis of Sales*," and the "*Introduction to a Devout Life*," are amongst the loveliest, tenderest, and most practical works on piety in existence. He always maintained that religion was good for secular life, and invented a special religious order not pledged to extreme austerity or abstinence which might be joined by all sorts and conditions of men. He was wont to say, "Religion must always be charitable, for bitter zeal does more harm than good—a judicious silence is better than a truth spoken without charity". The following most winning and Christ-like words addressed to open profligates and half-repentant sinners give us a good idea of his method, and shew us to what extent he condensed in his own saintly spirit the passion for Morals, the love of Man, and the perfect rest and trust in God: "Come, my dear children, come let me em-

brace you. Ah, let me hide you deep, deep in my very heart. God and I will assist you, all I ask of you is not to despair!" When they told him this was too soft a way to treat hardened sinners he would exclaim: "What! are they not also my flock—the blessed Lord has given them His blood, and shall I refuse them my tears?" So living and so loving this exquisite and tender spirit passed away in the fifty-sixth year of his age. In his last painful illness he frequently exclaimed, "What do I lingering here, my God, distant from Thee, separated from Thee!"—yet adding, "If I am still necessary for Thy people, I refuse not to labour". In such a life and death the unfailing characteristics of sainthood are writ so plain that he who runs may read, and by them St. Francis de Sales is seen to join hands with Bernard of Clairvaux, the saint of Assisi, and even St. Simeon of the pillar.

148. It is manifest now if we turn to any types of modern Sainthood—whether we may choose to think of Wesley, Newman, or Liddon, or Pusey, or Frederick D. Maurice, or Charles Kingsley, as approaching more or less the type of Christian Sainthood—it is manifest, I say, that their claims stand or fall just in proportion as they embody or fail to embody the great moral and spiritual passions which must appear to all ages and beneath all disguises, to rule and inspire the ideal of Christian Sainthood. The question which thus arises, is not "Are the Saints intelligible," for it is now manifest that they are most intelligible, but are they imitable, and if so, how, and generally to

what extent? The question is perhaps the most important one that could just at this moment be raised. To say of a type of life that it is the *best* but can only be aimed at by a *few*, is to condemn that type of life, or to deprive the vast majority of well-meaning people of all spiritual lift and buoyancy, by relegating them to a depressing second best and inevitable spiritual mediocrity. On the other hand it is undoubtedly true that there is such a thing as the Saintly vocation, and that all who are fitted for it may be justified here and now in cultivating the interior life more assiduously, and spending that time in prayer and meditation, which it is most right and necessary that vast numbers of others should spend in the market-place, or in trades and professions of an entirely secular kind. We all feel that Handel was better engaged in writing music, and Walter Scott in writing novels, and William Pitt in governing England, and Mrs. Siddons in playing Shakespeare, and Sir Joshua Reynolds in painting pictures, than any of these would have been had they spent their time in cloisters or hospitals, or visitation amongst the poor, or in attempts to preach the gospel. They laboured in their vocations, the Saint in his. Have they then no part or lot in his excellence? Much every way, just as all men—though not gifted like Handel, or Reynolds, or Siddons, may have part and lot in the common heritage of music, painting, and the drama of which these chosen geniuses were the great public exponents or reservoirs. Everyone, whatever his vocation and ministry, needs what the Saint lives to condense—

just as the Saint needs some influence from all vocations, not his own, to keep him in touch with those whom he would benefit. So you may be called to be a Saint, and not despise manual work, and you may be called to be a carpenter, and not neglect prayer; and the motto of the combined ideal stands "*Laborare est orare*". Yet undoubtedly the Saint is a chosen Vessel. The saintly spirit seems to me as though one should be born into the world a spiritual stage in advance of this life. In the Saint is found already developed what in most men is here rudimentary, and is probably *intended* to be rudimentary. An intense perception, a kind of abiding open vision of God, such as the Saint by temperament has instinctively, may never be destined for large numbers of us in this mortal life. It is rudimentary in all—it is developed on occasion—and at times—it is the undertone of life, and to be without it would no doubt be spiritual death—to cherish it, to feed it, to ignite and develop it, is the main object of the saintly life—but the exclusive cultivation of it, to the neglect and obscuration of every other aim and occupation, is no more intended for the masses than is virtuosity in music or literature, or painting, or politics;—special and exclusive cultivation—whether it be in art, science, or religion, can only be justified by special gifts. No, the saints are great reservoirs—wells of water in a barren and dry land—we need them, and we need what they have to give, but we do not for that reason mean to lay the whole country under water as they do on occasion in Holland. As a *vocation* Sainthood is for the chosen few. As an

influence Sainthood is for all, so that there may be a sense in which whatsoever we do, whether we eat or whether we drink, we may do it unto the Lord. Every part of every life needs testing and bracing by the characteristics of Sainthood. Are we open in our measure to these blessed influences? do we always ask "*Is it right?*" have we the passion for morals? do we ask "*Is it kind?*" Have we the enthusiasm of humanity? Do we always remember that God is above us and about us—that He can and will enter into communion with us, and make Himself known to us—that the world is "bound with golden cords about the feet of God"—that in Him alone we live and move and have our being—have we in a word at any times or seasons, and in any measure, the all-purifying passion of God? If the saint sees Him "face to face," do we ever see Him even "through a glass darkly," and do we look at the open vision of a Francis or an Augustine, and sigh to see Him as they saw Him "face to face"? If we do, then to us the resplendent muster roll of God's Saints on earth will not only be intelligible, but the Saints will be variously imitable by us as He was imitable by them—imitable in the sense of assimilating His life, and absorbing His divine spirit, leading our faltering steps to Calvary, and lifting our fainting hearts into the Heavenly Rest.



X.

“IS THE GREAT HEREAFTER A DREAM?”

“*NO!*”

X.

149. What Next? 150. Shall we be there? 151. The Spiritual Instinct. 152. The Inevitable. 153. Unreal Immortality. 154. Personal Immortality. 155. Oppositions of Science. 156. Scientific Agnosticism. 157. A Divine Sensibility. 158. A Rational Hypothesis. 159. A Rational Assumption. 160. Rational Witnesses. 161. Subject Matter for Materialists. 162. The Past. 163. The Poet's Testimony. 164. Stored-up Energies. 165. The Spiritual Self. 166. Conscious Continuity. 167. The Assurance of Jesus. 168. The Individual Consciousness. 169. The Orderly Arrangement of Facts. 170. The Unproved Truth. 171. The Multitude of Witnesses. 172. Direct Evidence. 173. Echoes of the Past. 174. God is Just. 175. This is Life Eternal.



X.

"IS THE GREAT HEREAFTER A DREAM?"

"NO!"

149. Sooner or later the question, "What next?" will become an all-absorbing one. It does not always press. Youth and health do not believe in death, but death stands at the door of each—"the bearded grain is reaped at a breath and the flowers that grow between". And when all is very nearly over, the sympathies dulled, sometimes worn out, the senses irresponsive, together with that awful dismal feeling that we are not much required and it is getting time to go, then the question, "What next?" seems to peal louder and louder in our ears with its own importunate thunder.

150. "Is there any hereafter?" Of course there is. Something must keep going on somehow, somewhere, somewhen—but the question for us is rather "*Shall we be there?*" "*Is there any survival beyond the grave for us?*" And here the preacher is met with a chill damper in some quarters. It is just now fashionable to pretend that it does not much signify. So long as we are happy and tolerably comfortable here, what does it matter? "I," says the successful swindler; "I," says the successful business man;

"I," says the man of pleasure ; "I," says the woman of fashion ; "I," says the young man just breaking into the sweets of life ; "I am for a long life of satisfaction here, or if not, at least, for a short life and a merry one, and after me the deluge ! I have no craving for anything beyond."

151. Undoubtedly we have heard this talk. Undoubtedly it is not all affectation. It stands for a certain truth of experience. What shall we say to people who don't care for the Immortality of the Soul ? Shall we accept their apathy as a sort of evidence against the belief ? On the contrary, we will say that their apathy is no evidence at all against immortality. Are not some persons callous to art, and some insensible to the charms of music ? Others care nothing for books—many would rather not trouble to read or write, and most people, as John Stuart Mill points out, by nature hate to be clean, but the civilized world holds ineradicable convictions about the reality and importance of art, music, literature, and cleanliness, and puts aside or coerces the indifferentists. You have no spiritual instincts ? nothing that speaks to you of immortality within ? Well, all the higher appetites are matters of cultivation and development. Each one lies in the rock, in "the hard granite of God's first idea". It has to be discovered and acquired. You are not alive to any spiritual nature here or now ? No matter, Nature is, still inexorable. You do not alter its constitution. You are spiritually constituted. History and Experience bears witness to that extraordinary fact.

152. Evolution is upwards—it is towards immortality. Sooner or later the dumb cord must vibrate even in you. You are born into a universe of spiritual affinities, the great ocean of spirit is about you ; in it you “live and move and have your being,” whether you will or no. The time must come, sooner or later, when you will have to reckon with the spiritual sphere which seems to you now so visionary and unreal, but which will then be seen to be the only real one—all Matter mere shadow and mist which has served its time, and in form after form more or less gross, has been used up, and is only to be cast aside that you may be clothed with some more subtle form—it may be still of matter—appropriate to sublimated conditions. You will not face Immortality now? Wait—by-and-by—this night—to-morrow—next year—Immortality will face you !

153. Now, clearly note *what* we mean by Immortality, and have done once for all with the fashionable substitutes for it. Do not believe them. They are not to the point. They do not cover the whole ground. First, there is the Immortality of the Race ! Forsooth ! There is no such thing. This earth will either be smashed to atoms or frozen to an icicle—and what then becomes of the race with all its accumulated stores of knowledge, its high evolutions and manifold developments? Then there is the Immortality of Thought—that, too, must end with the race—so must the Immortality of Action in its far-reaching results—so must the Immortality of Matter, so far as I am concerned. I am

made up into beans and cabbages, or go to build up the bodies of other organised creatures as ephemeral as myself. Meanwhile, I dance my giddy rounds above the abysses like those clouds of ephemeral gnats that rise and fall at sunset. I strut for an hour upon the tawdry stage of life. I fume and pant, and get hot, and the curtain drops suddenly, and all is over. Puppets similar to myself may benefit by my words, thoughts, and actions, or otherwise—but I shall not be there. I shall have no part or lot in these pasteboard Immortalities which are so freely offered by scientists, positivists, Comtists *et id genus omne*, and are so cheap.

154. No! I want to feel that I myself shall survive, that though particles, conditions, associations, even affections and affinities, may be changed or modified, the result of my commerce with all these has wrought out an entity which is *I, myself*, and that no such breach of continuity shall take place in my passage from this world through the darkness and dissolution of the grave as will avail to destroy my personality or impair my moral responsibility. The voice of that sublime and god-like egoism, without which a man is not a man—the intense and noble perception of the unspeakable gift of life, eternal life, the acknowledgment of this *κτῆμα ἐς αἰεί* of the soul comes forth even from the finest spirit in that pure “cry of the Human,” “I, I myself—I who love and aspire—I who bless the Infinite Power for giving me the grace to exist, the ecstasy to know, to love, to dream, to adore—I myself shall be in the Great Hereafter the same, and yet

changed from glory to glory! That is the Pearl-belief, the Pearl of Great Price. That is the real doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul!

155. You have seen a piece of red-hot iron suddenly plunged into a pail of cold water. The effect has been startling, but decisive, a violent fizzing spasm, and then all was dead, and the heated iron is drawn out cold and black and hard as before. Now, suppose these immense immortality aspirations of ours are plunged suddenly into the icy water of science, and meet with a similar fate, and there remains nothing but black, hard, cold, negation after the process. What then? Why we should have to submit. We should have to say, "The wish was father to the belief; but it is all a mistake. Science proves it is clearly not so. We die like dogs, and all our thoughts perish." Science proves no such thing. It is a matter quite notorious that science has lately climbed down from that *rostrum* where for fifty years past she has perched, screaming out "Impossible!" Her gospel of negation has been followed by a far more modest gospel. It is the gospel according to "Don't know". In Religion, Science is notoriously—for the most part Agnostic. Supreme in her own department, she has left off dogmatising positively about spheres she has not explored and phenomena for which she has at present no tests, and to which she has not the least clue, but which rest on evidence as good as any which she can produce for her own beliefs and alleged facts. Then the High Priests of Science have had such very hard raps (spirit raps amongst them) in this last

century of triumphant physical discovery and mechanical inventions, that, like the circus lion who knows that the innocent-looking switch in the hand of his keeper conceals a steel rod, the scientific dogmatist withdraws a little, and wonders whether it be worth while to risk lightly these saucy and reckless springs and snarls of negation.

156. It must be whispered low that rash and dogmatic as are the Parsons, the Men of Science have fairly outdone them in reckless assertion; and the worst of it is that whereas it is often difficult to prove that some absurd religious dogma is untrue it is the easiest thing in the world to show up a scientific fallacy. And this is why scientists have left off saying "No!" and have become Agnostics or "Don't Know-ists"! We have all heard of the astronomer who refused to look through the telescope because he declined to see a planet which he had declared non-existent. I can hear you exclaim, "*I know that astronomer*". Or the geographer who declared non-existent the lakes, rivers, and territories which Mr. Stanley has actually visited. Mr. Stanley "*knows that geographer*". A few of us may recollect how the proposal to light our streets with gas was scouted even in scientific quarters—how the steam-engine was derided, the electric telegraph shown to be impossible, and within the last few years I am told that even a very high scientific authority was guilty of deriding Edison's phonograph as another American mare's nest. In the last few months (1890) half the medical world has openly swallowed under the word

"*Hypnotism*" precisely the facts which they have derided for a century under the name of "*Mesmerism*," and they may yet be wrong—if not quite wrong, yet very wrong—about Spiritualism. For all which reasons it is prudent and most politic to say when you don't know, that you don't know. Scientific negation has therefore been most wisely and opportunely lifted from the doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul. Few are now bold enough to say they are "*quite sure*" death ends all. On the other hand they admit with Büchner that mind is not the same as matter, but that the phenomena of mind are expressed by matter and force + x , whilst they allow with Bain that mind might exist apart from brain and nervous system in some way hard to imagine, because we have no experience of it ; from which of course it follows with the consent of the most eminent materialists of the day that mind being not identical with matter, nor at all *in pari materia*, may very well exist apart from brain and nervous system as at present constituted.

157. Thus much has been, after years of haggling, wrung unwillingly, but triumphantly, from the scientific materialists, and we are not again likely to make them a present of so admirable a strategic position. Everyone is left perfectly free now to ask: "Why do we believe in a future life?" and to reply, "Because Jesus Christ says: 'I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish,' I rest upon His divine promise". "Well, so do I." "Then why seek for a confirmation of this belief in modern thought and

science as if you distrusted Jesus?" I answer, "It is not for the honour of Jesus, but rather for the honour of modern thought and science, to show that its sanest and most recent thinking hangs together with those words of Jesus to the effect that 'we have eternal life, and that we shall never perish'". Quite apart from the words of Jesus, I ask you again: "Why do you believe in a future life?" "Because I have a consciousness of Immortality!" "Nay! *that* you cannot have. You can have a *remembrance* of the Past and a *hope* for the Future, but you can only be *conscious* of the Present moment. You may be conscious of a certain divine sensibility which may lead you to infer that *you* are something which cannot die. Such a consciousness may indeed be yours; and when you find that this feeling is not confined to you, but has been common to millions ever since the world began you may fairly say: 'The divine sensibility which leads me to infer something spiritual and permanent in man which cannot die seems almost to amount to a *generic consciousness in the race!* That counts no doubt for something.'"

158. Again, "Why do you believe in a future life?" "Because it is an hypothesis which arranges for me more of the human facts which cry out for explanation than any other. Look at the broken lives, the incomplete purposes, the injustice, the discords unresolved, the senseless, aimless striving, the moral chaos which this world presents, if there be no completion or solution beyond! What chaos is here? Behold

everywhere marvellous order, subtlety, traces of purpose, and infinite design—but, in the highest range of earthly being, the realm of Human Nature, nothing but blind alleys, broken achievement, truncated lives, accumulated knowledge wasted, disciplined power wrecked ; in a word, the world of Human Nature is irrationally constituted if there be no future life ;” and, as Mr. Henry Sidgwick says: “ We are so made that we refuse to believe in a world irrationally constituted”. Such a notion does not hang together with our other thinking, and, therefore, we cannot feel it to be true. It collides with so many other facts we know to be true, therefore, till better advised, we reject it, and we assume a future life, because it harmonises with more facts, collides with fewer, and explains or responds to its deepest needs, and arranges our experiences, both mental and physical, better than any other known hypothesis. It, therefore, must count for something.

159. Why do I believe in a future life? Not because it is scientifically proved, but because it is often rational to believe what cannot be scientifically proved. The severest philosophers and logicians will tell you that it is impossible to prove the existence of an External World. All we are, or can be conscious of, is mental impressions and sensations, but we cannot prove the existence of anything beyond the thing which perceives or cognises. Yet we believe in the reality of matter, simply because it harmonises all our thinkings, and we are practically not constituted to believe otherwise. We cannot prove the Persistence of Force. There is absolutely no scientific proof that

the sun will rise to-morrow, or that the course of nature (nothing but sequences hitherto invariable as far as we know) will remain the same. We *believe* it will. We act on the belief. If we did not, no kind of orderly action could go on, and human society would be at a standstill. The belief again seems involved in our mental constitution. So it appears that science herself can't start without making these enormous demands on faith. She can build nothing without such colossal assumptions as the Reality of Matter external to the mind, and the Persistence of Force unfolded in the invariability of Natural Law. By the side of such scientific assumptions which deal, by the way, largely with the future, the theologian's assumption of a Future Life for man—man being what he is—ought not to appear either alarming or irrational since it squares with our present constitution, and arranges our mental and physical facts better than any other proposed assumption.

160. Why do I believe in a future life? Because, of late days, there has been a large increase of alleged evidence in its favour, of an altogether direct kind. There are, at this moment, millions of civilised people who believe that, in spite of the manifold impostures covered by the name of "Spiritualism," we have in our midst phenomena connected with that much-abused word which prove, beyond a doubt, the existence and activity of intelligence or mind outside the brain and nervous system. Of these millions of believers, thousands are educated, cultivated, and sane personages. Of these thousands, hundreds are well-known

and widely esteemed in art, literature, and science, and supposed to be as sane as Huxley or Tyndall on other matters. And amongst these representative believers in one or the other form of modern spiritualism, I note such names as Fichte, the German philosopher ; Professor de Morgan, the great mathematician ; Dr. Robert Chambers, the publisher ; Professor Hare, Professor of Chemistry in the University of Pennsylvania ; Professor Challis, Cambridge Astronomer ; Lord Brougham ; Varley, the electrician ; Professor Flammarion, the French astronomer ; Professor Crookes, the discoverer of the Radiometer, analytical chemist and gold medallist of the Royal Society ; Alfred Russell Wallace, the naturalist, and co-discoverer with Darwin of Evolution ; Nassau Senior ; Dr. Lockhart Robertson, etc., etc. Most of the above, though not all, are of opinion that we *have* evidence that the intelligence which manifests itself is human, and some are convinced that there is distinct evidence for the manifestations being identified with people who have passed away. If there is such evidence, and it challenges enquiry, the controversy (as it is already for millions) is at an end, and there is certainly a future life.

161. Modern Spiritualism presents us at any rate with subject matter to be reckoned with. It cannot be silenced. Every attempt to stifle it or sneer it down has collapsed. Every device of enraged Materialism has failed. We are almost sorry for the confident sceptics—especially the doctors—they are having such a rough time of it just now. There are twenty-three

well-known publications devoted to Spiritualism in different parts of the world. The leading one in England is certainly *Light*, conducted by an ex-clergyman, a man of extraordinary firmness and intelligence, a classical Professor at University College, and an Oxford graduate. These journals are widely read, and are all pledged to maintain the existence of disembodied spirits and their possible intercourse with spirits in the flesh; and they set themselves to record and verify alleged phenomena connected with the evidence for a future life. The only reason why we hear so little in favour of this huge accumulation of evidence, and so much against it, is, because the believers are mostly silent, whilst the sceptics are mostly noisy; but the alleged evidence is there. It will emerge. It will have to be reckoned with; and it will certainly count for something.

162. Why do I believe in a future life? Because such a belief is full of the echoes of the past. Past philosophies, past religions, past human hopes and fears and aspirations—stripped, it may be, of some superstition and a variety of impossible trappings, yet essentially the same—come back to us, and join our own spiritual strivings. And along with the prophecy comes a strange complementary doctrine out of the past. "If," people are now saying, "we shall live hereafter, why may we not have lived before?" Indeed, the ancients held that all incarnate spirit has lived before. The great drama of spiritual development from this neo-Antique platform unfolds itself as a continuous and eternal working-out of spiritual

individuality through matter, broken only by a sleep and a forgetting—such a sleep comes before birth, such a sleep after this life; then, through the grave and gate of death, we break into the life of the Great Hereafter. We are born into this world variously weighted or endowed. Our life-germ is the resultant of the previous life. We start here with the faculties acquired elsewhere to work on through another stage of the infinite progress. We awake after death similarly, to find ourselves the concentrated result of this life's work, discipline or environment. We pass on and up through new—probably more subtle or higher—forms of matter, to the great Beyond of human life.

163. Thus, to the prophetic, the poetic eye of faith, this stage of existence on earth is robbed alike of its terror, its harrowing mystery, and its cruel aimlessness. Thomas Bailey Aldrich, the sweet American poet, with the poet's true instinct of the living thoughts and convictions dearest to his age, has beautifully expressed the Past, Present and Future of the Human Destiny:—

IMMORTALITY BEFORE AND AFTER.

I vex me not with brooding on the years
That were ere I drew breath: why should I then
Distrust the darkness that may fall again
When life is done? Perchance in other spheres—
Dead planets—I once tasted mortal tears,
And walked as now among a throng of men,
Pondering things that lay beyond my ken,
Questioning death, and solacing my fears.

Who knows? Oft-times strange sense have I of this,
Vague memories that hold me with a spell,
Touches of unseen lips upon my brow,
Breathing some incommunicable bliss!
In years foregone, O Soul, was all not well?
Still lovelier life awaits thee. Fear not thou!

—Thomas Bailey Aldrich, in the *Century*.

164. So then, now you are making your next world. Professors Balfour Stewart and Tait have told us how the sun's light and heat and power go out into space, and are only partially accounted for. Yet they maintain that as nothing can be lost, so all these prodigious forces are being stored up in the unseen universe. This is a parable, for similarly your thoughts, words, and acts do not pass. They have an immediate function *here* and *now*, but their unexpended, unexhausted energy passes into an inner realm—the realm of your spirit, moulds and builds up that spirit life within which will, *bye-and-bye*, be found like the butterfly within the chrysalis, just what those thoughts, dispositions, words, actions have made it. *The result of all you do, and are, remains.*

165. This is your spiritual self. The life stock-in-trade, for good and evil, for better, for worse, with which you will have to start after life's fitful fever, after death's sleep. This is old philosophy, but it is also modern doctrine with which the poets, the teachers, the thinkers of our own age are beginning to rehabilitate the outworn dogmas and superannuated theology of the middle ages. "*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*"

166. "But," you say, "you speak of *my* immortality—*my* entering into a future life equipped with all the resultant influences of this one. You speak of Birth as a sleep and a forgetting, of death, as a sleep and a forgetting. If this be so, in what sense can you promise me *a personal conscious continuity*, if I have no recollection of a previous state, or only one so dim as the poet describes in such words as:—

The soul that rises with us—our life's star—
Hath had elsewhere its setting:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
Not in utter nakedness;
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God who is our home.

I answer, "You see there is at any rate an alleged faint memory of a former stage; you will find people with a vague sense of having lived before. No doubt religions have incorporated that sense, and moralities have been based on the theory of pre-existence. Yet is the memory of it all too faint to help us to any consciousness of a continuous moral development stretching out before birth, or reaching forward beyond death,—grant you that. The man before this life, the man after this life, seem hopelessly severed *in present consciousness* from the man *in this life*. How then is the future life, *his* future; the life eternal, *his*? The objection is cogent, can it be met? Admit with Pythagoras, or Wordsworth, or Aldrich, that the faintest connecting memorial consciousness *does* bind us to a previous existence, but that nevertheless, our spiritual quality and point of depar-

ture here is the exact result of what happened in a previous state ; then it may be one of the necessary conditions of the efficient working-out of the present life phase—that *the past should be thus almost completely veiled*—just as a man cannot apply himself steadily to present work unless he for the time forgets everything except what he is about. As that is a *voluntary* forgetting, so this other may be an *automatic*, organic forgetting. Or it may be that, owing to the grossness of the matter which composes our present bodies and which gives us the molecular instrument of memory and adapts us generally for earth life,—the things inscribed on the pages of *pre-natal* memory cannot be so sensitised as to be made decipherable *in this life*—just as lemon-juice on white paper is invisible without the application of subtle heat, or as a negative may lie undeveloped until the right chemicals be applied. Still as even here in our grossly material state we seem to have certain blurred *pre-natal* memories, when the spirit has taken to itself a rarer and subtler form of matter in its next stage, a *complete memory* of this life may accompany a *subtler state of matter*, and in the stage following after a third sleep and forgetting, *a memory of the two previous stages* or even more than two may come out, there being an improvement at each life-stage until *all the previous stages* at last adequately sensitised stand out and (to change the figure) we look back like a traveller who has been passing through an unknown land, yet ever upward and onward,—the stages of his journey being hid from his eyes. But gradually they become visible as he

looks back from succeeding elevations, until, standing at last, on the mountain summit, his life drama "orbs into the perfect whole he saw not when he moved therein". Such a moment God may have in store for each one of us. His ways will be justified. "We shall see as we are seen and know as we are known." Memory will be no longer a blurred vision or as a land seen "through a glass darkly," or not seen at all, but face to face with our past lives we shall stand in the white light of Eternity, the Judgment will be set and the Books opened. If this speculation is an hypothesis which restores continuity to the Past, Present, and Future of Human Life ; if it brings back our interest in the Future, and restores to us the feeling of Moral Continuity and Vital Responsibility, it should not be lightly set aside, for it must at least count for something ! And now to close.

167. The negation of science and philosophy, having, let us hope, been finally lifted, my belief in a Future Life may rest on the authoritative assurance of Jesus.

168. On an individual consciousness of a spiritual nature, a divine sensibility not only in me, but reinforced by a deep-seated consciousness in the race.

169. On the thoughts that a Future Life arranges in some kind of order the otherwise chaotic facts of this world.

170. On the thought that a Future Life is only one

of the many things which it is rational to believe without scientific proof.

171. On the great and notable increase within the last half century of alleged evidence showing the possibility of Mind existing apart from its ordinary concomitants—a brain and a nervous system.

172. On further direct alleged evidence of the existence *now* of those whom we call dead.

173. On the echoes of past religions and philosophies, which seem in their essence indestructible and which have maintained that all Spirit is working out, up into *Self-consciousness* through Matter, and that this life is only a stage following *pre-natal* life and to be followed by a life after death. But if you, as a congregation, ask me, as your minister, why I believe in a Future life, I will tell you plainly that whilst I take comfort from the manifold voices of earth which join the celestial choirs in reiterating the triumphant song of the Life Eternal, I believe in the soul's immortality because I believe in GOD. My future is bound up with His existence, with His character, and affinities such as by the inmost constitution of my nature I am compelled to believe them to be.

174. If there is (as John Stuart Mill thinks logically probable) a Sovereign Will at the foundation of the universe, if He means well to the creatures He has made (and that He means them ill, is to me unthinkable, and that He is indifferent to them seems

irrational)—then He, being what I am forced to believe He is, good, wise, powerful, having made me what I know I am, capable of achievement and co-operation with Him in moral purpose and love, filled also with an insatiable longing to live, to know, to enjoy, to develop (for all which implanted qualities He and He alone is responsible), then I maintain, and ever must maintain, that He will not leave me in the dust. Dare I say, *cannot* leave me in the dust? Have I not mind? Am I not a living spirit? Am I not His offspring? Are not mind in man and mind in GOD forever necessarily homogeneous, of the same kind? Are not both divine? If so, He cannot destroy me without destroying part of Himself, a part of Himself with which He has endowed me. But still the inextinguishable divine spark is there. It must live and grow and shine on. It cannot die. As Jesus said: "*As thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us*".

175. And so at length our place and our part and lot in the "Great Hereafter" becomes intelligible. The future life is assured because of the essential quality of human life here, the discovery of that quality is the Revelation made in Christ. "*This is life eternal, to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.*" Nothing but present assurance (this *is* life eternal) will ever make you certain about a life after death. "*Beloved,*" says the Disciple whom Jesus loved, "*now are we the sons of God.*" That was the ground, and that being so, it little mattered to St. John how, and when, and where the future life would

take on form. "*It doth not yet appear,*" and it does not matter (note the sublime indifference of the Apostle), "*what we shall be.*" He was sure GOD would provide—was he not a son *now*? Could he ever be less?

In years foregone, O Soul, was all not well?
Still lovelier life awaits thee. Fear not thou!



THREE SERMONS.



NOTE TO THE THREE SERMONS.

A GREAT desire having been expressed for the republication of three verbatim reports of these three sermons, I reprint them without further revision. The Sermon on Prayer appeared in the "Christian World Pulpit". It contains little which I have not said before, but much which I shall continue to say, I hope, with increasing force and clearness as long as I am permitted to preach. Prayer is the life-breath of Religion, and any thoughts or arguments which encourage people to pray by disclosing the *rationale* of Prayer, or by removing intellectual doubts and difficulties which hinder the joyous freedom and earnestness of devout Prayer, must tend to increase in us true religion and to nourish us with all goodness.

The Sermon on Mesmerism, Spiritualism, and Hypnotism, appeared in the columns of "Light". It was reprinted in the following week as a special supplement, the Editor appending the following notice:—"The demand for copies of 'Light' of July 27th containing the sermon recently delivered on 'Mesmerism, Spiritualism, and Hypnotism,' having been very largely in excess of the number printed, we readily accede to a request which has reached us from different

quarters to reproduce the discourse in the form of a supplement to the present issue". About the same time an American paper reproduced the sermon, and I also gave permission for its issue in pamphlet form. These facts best explain my further willingness to reissue a sermon, the substance of which has already been preached and printed by me in different forms for some years past. In the study of this Borderland will be found the ultimate reconciliation between Religion and Science, the key to the so-called miraculous and the interpretation of all the Religions of the World, including Christianity. The orthodox churches at present seem strangely blind to this, but the scales must sooner or later fall from their eyes. If "sooner," they may still take the lead in Religion instead of, as now, following afar off; if "later," they will awaken, but too late, only to find themselves forsaken, and their vineyard taken away and given to others.

The third Sermon on John Stuart Mill's religion aims at showing the inadequacy of the intellect alone to grapple with the facts of our spiritual consciousness whilst indicating the comfort and even necessity of an intellectual basis such as John Stuart Mill indicates for religious thinkers. The frank acceptance of the Supernatural, not in the sense of a belief in that which is contrary to Nature, but in the sense of a belief in that side of Nature which, whilst abundantly manifested, still defies analysis and explanation—this is the indispensable complement which can alone add

to religious speculation, that reasonable and loving trust which we call Faith. The reiteration of the argument concerning the mysteriously limited character of the Sovereign Will which controls the visible universe seemed to me sufficiently novel to leave in its place, although the argument occurs in the earlier pages of the book under the title "Is God Omnipotent?" To have eliminated it would further have completely destroyed the sermon on John Stuart Mill's religion, which I have been urged to reprint.





I.—ON PRAYER.



I.

ON PRAYER.

*Preached in St. James's Church, Marylebone,
November, 1889.*

BY God's grace we will say a few words about Prayer. I spoke this morning about it, and I said it was the foundation of all religion. I said that the foundation of religion did not really shift, although there was much shifting in the outward forms of religion. Similarly that prayer was not an uncertain thing, although there were a great many different kinds of prayer.

The recurrent notes of our religious life go sounding on through the ages : they refute our scepticism ; they are stronger than the individual whim and vagary ; they are part of the universal consciousness of humanity. I think it is Herbert Spencer who says that the only way we have of distinguishing between what is real and what is merely apparent, is by the persistence of our consciousness. If there was ever a persistent consciousness, it is certainly the consciousness of prayer that we notice running through the ages. From the earliest dawn of civilisation down

through the history of the world you will find the same tribute to the persistence of prayer. Do not be taken in about the true nature of prayer. Do not suppose it is a mental exercise where you play off one part of the brain against the other part. Sometimes people will ask : " Is there any one listening to my prayer ? " Was Jesus deceived when He uttered His prayers to His Father ? Was Paul deceived when he thought in answer to his prayer there stood a strong angel comforting him ? Have all the servants of God been fooled by a theory, that out of weakness they were made strong, that in themselves they could do nothing, but in Christ they could do all things ? Are your private prayers, your public prayers, a delusion ? Do you know how difficult it is to gather people together in this great city of London ? They do not come together for nothing. They insist upon there being something real. Think of the congregations throughout all this land, of what are they composed ? Are they all fools and drivelling idiots ? Are they so many slaves, tyrannised over and driven in hordes to Church by a tyrannical clergy ? No, they are sensible men and women. Is there any truth in this sentence : " O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come " ? Yes, there is the recurrent consciousness that we are not praying to ourselves when we pray, but that the cry of distress, or the pæan of aspiration, or the expression of our deep unfathomable needs, sometimes in words, and sometimes only in sighs, and sometimes in silent thoughts finds its way from the earth up to the golden throne of God. This is the reality of prayer ; this has existed in

the past, pervades the present, and will reach through the illimitable ages of eternity—the intense reality of the human spirit crying aloud to the Great Spirit.

Then comes a dark difficulty on the threshold of prayer—man's insignificance in the midst of the immensity of creation. Is it possible to conceive that the Creator cares for such insignificant beings as we are? You are cheated by what appears, not by what is real. It is true that as far as physical signs go we are but little atoms on the face of the earth, but it is not quantity but quality that tells. You are not clay, you are not dust; but you are immortal spirits, you are mind, you belong to the eternal kingdom of mind because you have an immortal spirit, because you can think, because you can feel, because you can aspire and adore. Therefore you must not be crushed by matter. You use matter, matter does not use you. Your mind, your spirit, that is what delivers you from the tyranny of the senses. As physical things we are insignificant, but as fragments of the great eternal kingdom of mind you are infinitely important. The great kingdom of mind is ruled over by God Himself. He is mind, He is will, He is spirit; and you have that mind, and will, and spirit and love in common with Him. Therefore, whilst on the one side physically you are infinitely small and insignificant, on the other side you are immeasurably great, important, eternal, by reason of your union with the Divine. That is what makes it possible for us to believe in prayer. Man is mind, God is mind. When the mind of man or any kind of mind comes face to face with the mind

of God, there arises an attraction or repulsion, love or hate.

One of the attributes of mind is, that out of sympathy grows love, out of love grows communion, out of communion grows helpfulness of the weak by the strong. Therefore, if you have mind, you know also that you have sympathies, powers of communion, and passions of love. Because there is mind, there must be sympathy kindled, love kindled, and helpfulness divine brought down to bear upon the weakness which is human.

How is it possible to conceive of spiritual communion? You cannot conceive of it, but you know that it exists. There are a great many things that you cannot explain, but you know that they are. How does one mind communicate with another? In these days we have had some very strange experiments in connection with thought transference. We are told that in some inexplicable manner one human mind is able to impress another human mind, not only with thoughts, but to inspire will and purpose. Scientific men have this peculiarity: that every new fact is denied by them for a certain time, and after a few years, when the new fact cannot be gainsaid, they change the name, and then accept the new fact. That was the way with mesmerism. As long as it was called mesmerism, all the scientific men said, "It is all rubbish"; but when they found the facts were undoubtedly true, they changed the name and called it hypnotism, and swallowed the facts.

Now, one of the most remarkable facts is this: that one mind can transfer silently, without words,

its thoughts and its will to another mind, and the most horrible consequences may result ; so that, if this power is abused, and legislation is not speedily brought to bear upon the exercise of it, I know not what chaos will result. It seems that, in the course of these experiments, the hypnotiser can resolve in his own mind that the subject of his experiment shall commit a crime at a particular hour of a particular day, and then the mind of the unfortunate person is irresistibly pressed to go and commit that crime. In one case, when a particular hour came, the patient was seen to secrete what he conceived to be a knife—happily, only a paper-knife was within his reach—and, coming up to his intended victim in the most affable manner, he suddenly raised his hand to stab. Of course the crime was prevented ; but, beyond all doubt, the fact that the brain of that person had been impressed, and that he was acting by a power beyond his own, was confirmed. What is this power ? If minds affect one another, how can you deny the possibility of mind outside the body impressing mind within the body ? If there is such a thing as an intelligent spirit that thus silently and mysteriously impresses thoughts and feelings, how can you deny that a Divine Being impresses the brain of His creatures ?

I said this morning there were also other links in that chain ; that all God's work was intermediate ; that He never works directly ; that He always chooses intermediate means. So, in prayer, the easiest way to conceive of a Divine Being in communion with His creature is, that He uses the appropriate means,

whereby He inspires the imagination, kindles the thoughts and feelings ; and that, through the mystic chain of appropriate intermediate agencies, He reaches His ends.

This being so, does it not throw some light upon what we may expect to get through prayer, and what we have a right to pray for? The highest form of prayer is not to get what you want exactly, but to bring our minds into communion with God, whether we get what we want or not.

But apart from that highest function, it is an eternally interesting question to us, what may we expect to get, what may we reasonably ask for in prayer, and then I say in the most uncompromising manner, ask for just what you want. That is the best way. That is the beginning. God alone knows the end. You may reasonably ask for others' sake that others may be influenced by you, or that you may be influenced by others. If you by prayer set in motion a spiritual mechanism, is not it very possible that our prayers for others may be very efficacious in ways we little dream of? Hence through this theory of Divine control by intermediary agencies, can I not say to many a mother here, "Mother, you may pray for your son ; husband, you may pray for your wife ; wife, you may pray for your husband ; parents, you may pray for your children, when you see them wayward, unwise, uncontrolled. You, by your prayers, may set in motion a chain of spiritual agency which may bring them the very aids they most need.

May I not say, too, that you may pray in all cases of sickness. "Oh !" you say, "will the fever be stayed

by prayer? Will a miracle be wrought in answer to prayer?" No, I never said that, or meant that. What I claim for prayer is this, not introducing chaos into an orderly world, not setting aside the laws of nature, but giving you the control over them. If your mind may be controlled by a higher wisdom, and you are sick, may you not pray that you may be guided to the man who has an intuition with regard to your sickness? May not you pray that you may have will power to follow him, in so far as he is wise? May you not believe that you have the power of placing yourself in relation with the higher wisdom in questions of sickness, and be guided to the people most able to cure you.

Some one will say: "God knows, after all, what is best for you; God will give what is good for you without you asking Him". No, I do not say that. I might as well say, "Do you, when in debt and wanting money, wait until the Almighty happens to send you a £5 note?" No; when a man wants money you say, "Let him work for it, use the usual means; use his intelligence; use his knowledge of the world, and so supply the defect in the exchequer". If a man wants a thing he asks for it, and if he does not ask for it he does not get it as a rule, and very often he does not get it when he asks for it. Why should you cast off your common sense and common logic the instant you enter the religious sphere? The petitioner does not get anything unless he nerves himself to formulate his petition, and so, in the other sphere, may it not be a part of the condition of your getting what you want that you shall enter into com-

munion with One who knows your petitions before you ask, and your ignorance in asking, but One also who makes your petition the necessary link in the chain of causation which is to give you what you want, and then, only then, do for you "exceeding abundantly" above what you are able to ask or even to think?

Now, a few closing words on the manner of prayer. I want to show you what will be the manner of effective prayer. You may say your prayers in any sort of way or no sort of way ; you may come into church, and the words of the Litany may rattle through your brain : but if the prayer has not been prayed, who will say "Amen"? If you come to the end of the Lord's Prayer, and have not realised a single word of its meaning, stop short, and do not say "Amen".

There are all kinds of prayers. What is the kind of prayer which gets what it wants? What is the kind of prayer which takes heaven by storm? "*Pray without ceasing*," says the Apostle ; and Jesus said that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint". That does not mean that you are always to be on your knees, or always to be in church. Take the services as you would your food. Go where and when you think you are likely to get nourishment. Use the services of God intelligently. "Always pray." You cannot always be praying ; you must be sometimes working ; you must sometimes be taking the recreations and pleasures of life which will fit you for work. I do not say that sometimes the truest and noblest enjoyment is not found in prayer. I trust

that more than one thrill of exhilarating joy has bounded through your being to-day, when you have assembled in God's house.

What does "always praying" mean? It means, never be in such a condition that you cannot resort in prayer to God. Be able at any moment to go into that inner chamber of your mind and be alone with your Father. There ought to be no scene or recreation which makes it impossible for a man to be in prayer when the hour of prayer comes.

The second way of prayer is this—*earnestness*. Supposing a person wants a thing very much, and goes and says to another, "Give me this," in such a low voice that the other cannot hear it, or says it in such an indifferent tone that the person does not notice him. Will the person believe that he is in earnest? No. He must say: "I beg you to give it me; I long for it; I agonise for it". Then we are convinced of his sincerity. So, what does the Apostle tell us? He says: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much". If you want what you pray for, the prayer must be earnest. If you cannot get anything out of a man unless he is convinced that you are in earnest, so God says you shall get nothing unless you are in earnest. You will say: "That is very hard on the side of God". No; I do not think so. I think it is in the way of cause and effect; I think it is in the way of what is expected between beings who are in sympathy with one another. It seems to me altogether natural that a man should not get his prayer answered unless he is earnest about it.

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

And, lastly, there must be *sincerity*. You must be sincere in your prayers. If, when you bring your gift to the altar, you remember that your brother hath aught against you, go your way, first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. If I incline mine ear to wickedness Thou, Lord, wilt not hear me. Cleanse your hearts, you sinners; wash you and make you clean. Go to One who can wash you and make you whiter than snow. Aspire to please God, trying to do His will, and try to root out of your hearts all that is a barrier between you and the Divine love. In that spirit come. The Apostle Paul said: "Not as though I had attained," but come in the power of aspiration, and by all means let it be in the power of sincerity. Come as far as your mind and purpose go with clean hands; come with a guileless intent.

Now you have not only the ground of prayer unfolded to you in the homogeneity of mind and matter, but also the mechanism of prayer in the form of intermediate agencies, which supplies a kind of *rationale* of the way in which God sways the brain and the nervous system; and you have also those three secrets which make prayer effectual, enabling you to enter into close communion and to get what you want when you ask it. Prayer must be constant. "I will that men pray always, and not faint." Prayer is earnest. The violent take heaven by storm; "the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much". And prayer is

sincere. Do not come with evil thoughts in your heart; do not come with a lie in your right hand to God, but come in sincerity of purpose, knowing your frailty it may be, but also repudiating that frailty in the power of a higher aspiration. Constancy, insistency, sincerity—there you have the three points of effectual prayer.





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II.—MESMERISM, SPIRITUALISM, AND
HYPNOTISM.





II.

MESMERISM, SPIRITUALISM, AND HYPNOTISM.

*Preached at St. James's, Westmoreland Street,
Marylebone.*

July, 1889.

A WISE man says that there is a time to speak and a time to keep silence. The best time to speak is when people are inclined to listen to you. Everyone has to wait for what he calls a favourable opportunity. I think that the time to speak about Mesmerism, Hypnotism, and Spiritualism has come. It is a strange thing as we look back over the history of opinion to remember that some fifteen or twenty years ago nobody could open his mouth publicly upon these questions without either being called a fool or a liar. But things have very much changed, because there must be so very many fools, and so very many liars, who have in every other respect been considered sane, intelligent, and trustworthy people. Experiences have been spread abroad, and men are now wanting to know what are the real facts and what are the reliable premises, in order that they may come to

something like sound conclusions. Then there is a great interest taken in these mystical subjects just now. It is a kind of reaction wave against the hard Materialism and raw Atheism that have been about.

Men have had a taste of raw Atheism and they do not like it. They have had a taste of Materialism, and after all they find that it will not explain everything ; and then they come back to those ancient and recurrent beliefs and hopes that are full of immortality; and they ask themselves, as they peer wistfully into the darkness whether it is all a dream, whether the old landmarks have been rooted up, never more to be planted, whether there is a way of re-instating and restating those truths which have been encrusted with superstition and overlaid with the growth of many ages, and whether we may not rescue something that is at the bottom of such things as occur to the mind, when I mention these three words—Mesmerism, Hypnotism, and Spiritualism.

These are not old, they are recurrent truths, and the hopes to which they bear witness are inscribed upon the earliest pages of human tradition. I read that "God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul". By that I understand a belief that is ineradicable. It has gone through the ages under different forms, namely, that we are not mere dust and ashes although we may be formed out of earth, cunningly devised materially, but that there is something in us which has matured during this struggle through life, a something in us which will not die, and that the ancient poet's words *non omnis moriar*—I shall not all of me die—I shall not entirely

die—admit of a wholly spiritual application for those who believe in the survival of the Ego, and in the possibility of life beyond the grave, apart from the present bodily organism.

Now, first I should like to say what Mesmerism, Spiritualism, and Hypnotism are. People ask what is the difference between Mesmerism and Hypnotism. There is not much difference. Hypnotism is a new word, because scientific people who had rejected Mesmerism did not like to accept the facts of Mesmerism without giving them a new name; so they called them Hypnotism. I am not saying that there are not phenomena included under Hypnotism which are somewhat different from those of mesmerism, but substantially Mesmerism and Hypnotism both deal with the mystical and imperfectly explored side of our nature, that transcendental and unexplained portion of human nature which seems constantly to make itself felt and sometimes to make itself manifest to the bodily senses. Hypnotism and Mesmerism deal with these abnormal conditions of human nature. Then what is Spiritualism? Spiritualism lays hold of this side of human nature, this unexplained side of human nature, and builds upon it the doctrine—what I may call almost a new doctrine—of immortality; it proclaims that our intelligence survives death, and that by-and-bye we shall have pursuits and interests very similar to those that now engage our attention. And it further teaches that the communion between these spheres, the visible and the invisible sphere, under abnormal conditions and states may be actually made manifest during this present life. That is a brief and,

of course, a very rough definition of Mesmerism, Hypnotism, and Spiritualism.

This morning I am going to ask what is the definition of Mesmerism and Hypnotism, and what are the evidence of Mesmerism and Hypnotism? And then I am going to ask what is the definition of Spiritualism, and further, what are the evidences of Spiritualism?

First, I will deal with Mesmerism and Hypnotism. I am going to avoid, as far as I can, stories and anecdotes—some of you will be sorry to hear that—and I am going to avoid personal experiences. I do it advisedly, because I want only to exhibit what may be fairly considered as evidence by reasonably-minded people in a mixed congregation. I therefore avoid stories because I cannot prove my stories as I go along, however good the evidence may be; I avoid also personal experiences because you cannot cross-question me from the pew. Therefore I cannot give the proofs and grounds on which any personal experiences of mine may rest. What I want to do is to present the definition and explanation of these things and then to evidence them, and what I want to point out is the contact between Mesmerism and Spiritualism; and lastly, the nature of the momentous hope and also momentous responsibilities which rest upon us if we believe even in a nucleus of the truth which lies at the bottom of these expressions.

Now, roughly speaking, what is the kind of thing that we mean when we speak of Mesmerism? What kind of definition should we use? I have said that Mesmerism and Hypnotism and Somnambulism are all

descriptive of a certain mystical side of our nature, which becomes manifest under peculiar conditions. What is the nature of these manifestations? You all know when persons are mesmerised that their minds are impressed by the mesmeriser; they take on the thoughts which are passing through the head of the man who mesmerises. Then there is an intensification of their own faculties, so that it is alleged people become what is called clairvoyant and clairaudent: that is, they see more than they can see with their bodily eyes, and they hear more than they can hear with their bodily ears. Then, when the person passes into a deep sleep, there takes place what is called a trance-speaking. They seem to wake up to a consciousness of things which we know nothing about, and give utterance sometimes in foreign languages to words and to thoughts which in their natural state they are incapable of appreciating. Then the mesmeriser seems to lay hold of the body, move it, and walk it about; and then it is what is called somnambulism. Then he seems to lay hold of the muscles of the body, and make them abnormally rigid, so that a person stretched stiff between two chairs can bear enormous weights, which he could not bear without suffering, or perhaps not at all, in his natural state: there is a great accession of muscular strength. Mesmerism seems to lay hold of the nervous system, and to paralyse the nerves of sensation, so that when a person is mesmerised he may actually undergo painlessly operations, which would cause acute suffering when he was awake. These are the alleged facts which give you a better description, perhaps, than any formal

definition of what is meant by Mesmerism, Hypnotism, and Spiritualism. I need not explain them any further, because these phenomena are now so spread abroad and so many people practise them privately that one or more of these facts may have come before the attention of almost everybody in this congregation. Now, how shall we evidence these facts? Shall I tell you a number of stories? No. Shall I tell you what I have seen? No. I shall ask you, however, whilst I speak, to remember carefully the number of stories you have heard, and I shall ask you to remember also any experiences which you have had yourselves in connection with Mesmerism, Hypnotism, and Somnambulism. But I shall evidence this thing more historically. I think that is the most satisfactory way of dealing with a mixed congregation. I will call your attention, for instance, to the fact that, putting aside the traditions of past ages, the new version, the new life of Mesmerism, dates from about the end of the last century. In all ages and in all countries these phenomena have been known and practised; but what I may call the science or practice of Mesmerism dates from about 1770 or 1780, as connected with the name of Mesmer. Mesmer lived at the time of the French Revolution. People were very sceptical then, and although Mesmer convinced many that he could send people to sleep and do operations, and that when asleep they were capable of things which they were utterly incapable of in their normal conditions, yet his name was covered with a certain amount of distrust owing to the extremely sceptical age in which he lived, and the radical upheaval of all political, social,

and religious ideas at that period. Then about 1825 France sets her Academy of Medicine to expose the phenomena of Mesmerism. The most eminent French doctors then sat in conclave and examined mesmeric cases, and they came to the conclusion that there was a great deal at the bottom of Mesmerism, and that the phenomena of Mesmerism, so far from being fraudulent, were actual and real. They appended their names to a very remarkable statement of belief about Mesmerism, and it was signed by MM. Itard, Fouquier, and Bourdois de la Motte, and many other leading physicians of Paris at that time, between 1825 and 1831. Then Dr. Elliotson in London took up Mesmerism and he treated patients successfully. There was for some time a mesmeric hospital in the Marylebone-road, where treatment was carried on, and where operations were painlessly performed—not always painlessly, however. Then came in chloroform, and that killed the therapeutic power of Mesmerism: chloroform is certain in operations and Mesmerism is extremely uncertain, and it is also difficult to get the right conditions realised. Dr. Elliotson being a great physician in large practice lost nearly the whole of it because he said he believed in Mesmerism. If he had only thought twice he would have said that he believed in therapeutic Magnetism or Psychopathy, or some new word: he would have been all right if he had not used the word “Mesmer”. He said what he meant; he used terms which he did not know he was going to be ruined by. In these days, Dr. Tuckey, of Green Street, Grosvenor Square, publishes a book, and calls it *Hypnotism*, or something of the sort, and nobody

finds fault with it ; it is a new development of science, and at this moment the doctors in Paris, though they will not use the name "Mesmer," use the word Hypnotism, and at La Salpêtrière they are carrying out remarkable experiments which bear witness to the general truths of the facts of Mesmerism, namely, that one mind can impress another, that powers are intensified, that you can become cognisant and capable of things in Mesmerism that you cannot be cognisant of when you are in the natural state. All these phenomena are vouched for now by some of the first scientific men in France, only they call it by a different name. I think this is a much more serious question than some people think. I have attended the conjuring performance of M. Verbeck, Kennedy, and others. I saw them, *bona fide*, magnetise, or mesmerise, or impress people in the audience. I think it is a serious question if these things are real, if one human being has the power thus to affect another, to impress his mind, perhaps at a distance, so that you can bring a person with whom you are *en rapport* to you by the power of your will so that he will come into the room, rushing dazed into the room, not knowing why he comes, but feeling an irresistible impulse to come, and being absolutely at your disposal and under your influence and dominion. I think this is a very awful power, and I think such exhibitions as that of M. Verbeck (a very clever man) ought not to be allowed. I do not think these experiments in electro-Biology ought to be allowed. They are only allowed because people say it is all stuff and nonsense. But if scientific people come to the conclusion that mind can

influence mind and control others in that way, I think it is a most serious thing. Let me say that in other countries these things are acknowledged and controlled by law. A great deal of this kind of thing was going on in the Mosaic times ; it was sometimes called witchcraft and all sorts of things, but it had to be controlled. Why ? Because it was real. Call it what you will and explain it how you may, there was the fact that one mind could control another mind if you gave the opportunity. Then Hypnotism, Braidism, or Narcotism, *et id genus omne*, should be very carefully controlled. It creeps in under what is called therapeutic Magnetism. That is a very valuable thing. I think that a great many of our doctors are coming to that conclusion, and that a great many more who have not the courage to say it have also come to that conclusion. But therapeutic Magnetism may open the door to a great deal of immorality and danger ; and nobody ought to be allowed the facility in an abnormal manner of obtaining control over the brain and the will power of other human beings in order to paralyse their responsibility and bring them under the dominion of any moral law or any moral control save that which is vested in the individual himself. I merely say this to show you that the subject is very important and that it has points of contact with the moral life and with the conduct of the right relations that ought to exist between human beings and society at large.

Now let me ask with reference to Spiritualism what it is, and again what are the evidences of Spiritualism ? Spiritualism seizes on this unknown and unexplored

side of our nature with all its wonderful possibilities, the borderland, as I may say, between body and mind, and it builds upon these facts of our nature or these alleged facts of our nature, its own system, supporting the hope that is full of immortality and the life beyond the grave. The phenomena, or alleged phenomena, of Spiritualism are tolerably familiar to you. They are motions under peculiar conditions, motions of furniture, sounds heard in the room, cold winds blowing over people, or supposed to ; and then there come appearances, different appearances, sometimes a wholly developed figure, and sometimes a mere light, depending upon the susceptibilities, so it is said, of people present. Then there come messages through writing, then there is automatic writing and psychography when the hand of the human being is used. At other times, pencils may be shut up in desks and writings appear on paper. And then it is said that information is conveyed at these meetings which nobody in the meeting knows anything about or can know anything about ; and it is alleged that discoveries have been made, and so forth. You know tolerably well what I mean by the phenomena of Spiritualism.

Then when we speak of evidences of Spiritualism we will adopt the same method as in speaking of the evidences of Mesmerism. We went back and showed that although a modern thing from one point of view it was an ancient thing from another point of view, and we showed the steps in modern history which brought men into something like a consensus about the reality of Mesmerism. So we will now deal with Spiritualism. We might go back to the Hindoos, and show that the

whole Hindoo philosophy was saturated with the belief of Spiritualistic phenomena. We might come to the days of the Alexandrine philosophy later on, about the third century, when Greece was most sceptical, and show you something like Spiritualism was formulated in the schools of Alexandria. We might take up the Bible and show how from the first page to the end, mixed up, perhaps, with the superstition of the age, mixed up with credulity and perhaps misunderstanding, there is a steady string of evidence, or alleged evidence, in connection with the phenomena of Spiritualism. There is not a single phenomenon which now takes place at so-called Spiritualistic meetings which cannot be matched in its character in the Old Testament and the New. The phenomena repeat themselves from age to age; they are always more or less of the same kind; there is the blowing of the wind—sometimes it is called “a rushing mighty wind”; sometimes there is the appearance of light or tongues of fire, the shaking and quaking of furniture, and the shaking of the room; and then there is speaking with tongues. There is also the phenomenon of levitation, when this or that person is said to be caught up or suspended in mid-air, and what not. All these things repeat themselves, and it is extraordinary to find after a lapse of five hundred or a thousand years in different countries and different nations wholly unconnected with each other the same kind of phenomena which we are now trying to investigate in connection with Spiritualism. The same kind of phenomena have constantly reappeared, and been recurrent. Take up the New Testament and you may find a little philosophy up-

on the therapeutic magnetism as to how the early apostles went and anointed the sick with oil, and they recovered ; how the touch of some people was found to be magnetic ; how healing came through prayer ; and the intensification of those abnormal conditions in which those great blessings seem to flow from some people to other people. All these are alleged facts, and they are thought and supposed to be miracles and confined to the Bible. If you read Greek history and Roman history and middle age history, and ancient history, you will find that precisely the same kind of things have always been going on, and naturally have always been mixed up with a very vast amount of superstition, and imposture and credulity, and, I am sorry to say, great knavery. If you pass on from the early days of Christianity in the Bible to the middle ages, you will find the same things occurring in the writings of Paracelsus, Von Hohenheim, and others. Then when you come to Kant, the modern German philosopher, you will find him saying that phenomena of this kind are quite possible in a universe constituted as ours is ; and when you come to Swedenborg, of course you come to a life which is perfectly saturated with the belief, and, perhaps, a well-founded belief, in the nature of some of these phenomena.

Then when you come to our own country, about 1840, for it is more instructive to deal with things near our own time than to dive into the mists of antiquity, you find Lord Brougham, Lord Houghton, and Lord Dunraven ; later on, Mr. Crookes, Mr. Cox, Dr. Wallace, and Dale Owen of America, and a

number of other people very much interested in Spiritualistic phenomena, and ending by all bearing their testimony that there is a substantial nucleus of truth at the bottom of it. Lord Brougham very early, when poor Elliotson was suffering under the stigma of superstition and imposture, used these remarkable words :—" I perceive that in the cloudless sky of scepticism there is a rain-cloud not bigger than a man's hand, and that cloud is modern Spiritualism ". It shows the great foresight and courage of Lord Brougham at that time, when such an expression would naturally be received with ridicule, to have spoken such words as those. There are at this moment at least four newspapers in England that are entirely devoted to the explanation and advocacy of Spiritualism. In Germany there is a most rabid and dead-set against Spiritualism, yet there are some of the most famous German scientific names on the side of Spiritualistic phenomena. They do not commit themselves always, or explain it by Spiritualistic theosophy or philosophy, but they give a tribute to the phenomena of Spiritualism. Many of them also go so far as to say that it is absolutely certain that through these phenomena is evidenced the presence of intelligences outside the body. You have such names as those of Weber, Zöllner, and others, all men who had attained great distinction in their several departments before they went in at all for what is called Spiritualism. When clever men say they believe in the phenomena of Spiritualism, the man of the world, and very often the scientific man, says, " Oh, yes, clever men, you know, have constantly these bees in

their bonnets ; you constantly find a very clever man has some sort of delusion ; he is mad, really mad, on one point”.

It is all very well, but there are such a number of them mad, that is the difficulty. It is so difficult to believe that Lord Brougham was mad, that Mr. Crookes was mad, that the late Lord Houghton, Monckton Milnes, was mad, and that Mr. Wallace was mad. And I am mad, perhaps, if I believe in it at all. I am not committing myself this morning. I am merely what I call evidencing Spiritualism. Then the man of the world constantly says, “Society is divided into three classes, men, women, and clergymen” ; and they place the clergymen in their credulity and superstition a little lower than the angels—I mean the women ; and therefore the evidence of clergymen on Spiritualism would not be considered as of much value. But it is a strange thing how few clergymen do say that they think anything of Spiritualism at all ; they want to confine it entirely to the sacred volume and to Christianity, they do not take the larger and more philosophic grasp ; they do not even open their eyes to the fact that these phenomena or some things of the same kind have been going on through human history. But it is not on the clergy that the onus rests. The evidence of Spiritualism, such historical evidence as I bring this morning, the evidence for the substantial phenomena of Spiritualism, and very largely, too, let me say, for the explanation of those phenomena as connected with active intelligences, external to ourselves, is this, that at this moment, although many scientific people, like ostriches, bury

their heads in the sand and assure us that no one now believes in miracles who has any sense, and no one now believes in the phenomena of Spiritualism, and that all phenomena of Mesmerism can be explained quite simply—although this is constantly said, yet now in the latter part of the nineteenth century, so far from the belief in these things being extinct, there are millions of human beings throughout the civilised world who believe in them. Of these millions, there are some tens of thousands whose names are pretty well known; there are some thousands whose names are very well known; there are some hundreds whose names are known everywhere as illustrious, sane, and eminent persons; and there are some tens who are amongst the greater thinkers and greatest discoverers of the age. That is the kind of evidence which we should ponder if we feel inclined to dismiss the subject of Spiritualism as a thing wholly connected with imposture, or, if true, not worthy the consideration of a sensible man. I am merely stating these things in a mixed congregation because they are a kind of statement which you can bring forward upon a subject of this kind without making people anxious to cross-question you from the pew immediately.

Now the whole subject of imposture and credulity and the miserable inadequacy of the messages conveyed at Spiritualistic séances—all that I put aside, because it is beside the point. What we want to find out is whether these things actually do occur, and we want to find out whether they can be explained without recourse to that belief in an intelligence outside

the circle. If you can have evidence of the existence of mind apart from the brain and the nervous system, if you can have evidence of facts conveyed at a séance, for instance, not known, and which could not be known to anybody present, if you can get clues which can be followed up and verified of a very extraordinary and complex nature, then I say if there is evidence of intelligence at work apart from the ordinary know laws of matter you annihilate the materialistic argument which destroys the immortality of the soul. It does not follow that you will survive, but it follows that there is no impossibility of your surviving if you can produce a mind actually operating outside the laws and the conditions of the present brain and the nervous system. That is why religious people ought to be very keen in trying to find out whether the evidence exists of the operation of mind outside the limits of the bodily framework.

Now what is the theory underlying Mesmerism and Spiritualism? What is the theory which professes to place these things upon a reasonable basis and to explain facts? Supposing you admit for the sake of argument, the main facts of Mesmerism and the main facts of Spiritualism, let me state, if I can make it clear to you, the kind of theory of body and soul which goes along with and explains and arranges these facts. That theory is best summed up in the words of St. Paul when he says: "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body". The philosophy of your body and soul, I may call it a tripartite philosophy or theory, and it is this. You have a body; then you have a spiritual body within that

body ; then you have got a something you call mind which is in immediate connection with that spiritual body, and this, as I understand it, is what the Spiritualists believe, this is their philosophy. We are tripartite. There is the natural body, there is the spiritual body which floods it as ink will flood blotting paper, or magnetism will flood iron, or oil will flood any substance which absorbs it entirely.

It is a body within a body. It is born with every natural body—the spiritual body. But it is rudimentary. The spiritual body is developed by the play of forces going on all through life, which we call mind, dealing with the material environment so that the spiritual body which is born germinally in you, existing faintly, is through all life, as you go along gradually precipitated or crystallised or built up by the action of the mind. We are tripartite. There is the physical body and the spiritual body, and then the mind at the back of the spiritual body. The mind, the theory is, has a great immediate grip over this body, but the grip the mind has over it is over the spiritual body. The mind is engaged in building up the spiritual body and the spiritual body is the thing which has a grip over the physical body. That is what I understand the theory to be. The spiritual body goes on growing, a life within a life, all through your life, and the nature and the character of it depend upon the action of your mind upon it. The reason why the body is so marvellously affected by the mind is that the mind moulds and uses this spiritual body, which has in its turn a great grip on the material body and moulds it to its will. If, then,

you can intensify the powers of the mind, you control and grip in that sense the spiritual body which is within you, growing and developing. If you can control the spiritual body you control that which immediately controls the physical body. And that is why such extraordinary effects are produced upon the physical body through the spiritual body. It has a tendency to become whatever the spiritual body is. That is what I believe to be a brief summary of the philosophy of the matter.

Now the point is, does this explain facts? If you believe that there is this spiritual body within you, and if you believe that at death when the shock comes and separates or disengages the spiritual body which is closely in connection with the mind, that is yourself, you may allow your physical body to crumble away, and you will say *non omnis moriar*—I shall emerge. That thing which the play of the forces of the mind upon me has been building up within me is that thing with which I am going to proceed into the new realm. I can leave the husk here ; I can leave that which served my purpose and which was moulded to a certain extent by the spiritual body, I can leave that behind me and go on. Does this explain alleged phenomena and recurrent experiences? Yes. First, it explains the phantasms of the living ; then it explains the phantasms of the dead. It explains the phantasms of the living, that is to say, the appearance of a person at a distance before death when he is in a living state. There was a vast amount of evidence for this—I mean the stories such as you connect with Swedenborg, as when he went into a dead trance and

then appeared at a distance to somebody else. That was the commonest thing in the life of Swedenborg. If you have looked into the history of the matter you will find that the evidence for the phantasms of the living is very widespread, but still greater is the evidence for the phantasms of the dead ; that is to say that at the moment of death when the shock comes and the spiritual body is disengaged, not by trance or sleep but by death, that spiritual body which has been built up by mind, the *wraith*, as we call it, appears at a distant place. The evidence for that is very widespread indeed, and it can hardly be dismissed. I suppose that you in this church, when you begin to tell what are called ghost stories round a table, however small the circle, there is not one person who has not got a good ghost story to tell, and sometimes you will find that when the story is traced back it rests upon tolerably good evidence. I say upon the hypothesis of there being a body within a body, which under abnormal circumstances may be disengaged for a short time, but at death is disengaged finally—if that is true it explains the phantasms of the living and the phantasms of the dead. Then if you believe that mind controls and impresses the spiritual body, that it causes it to assume an appearance, you have the explanation of the reason why these appearances are sometimes clothed, and why they sometimes appear to wear the ornaments peculiar with them, such as hats and bonnets, and clothes and anything else. The reason is this: that the mind uses the spiritual body to impress some one else at a distance, and naturally invests the spiritual body with

the symbols which would be recognised. You see it is the operation of the mind as much as of the spiritual body, and the mind having close grip over the spiritual body builds up the spiritual body for the occasion in such a manner as shall bring in the individuality of the person before the person who is to be interviewed or visited. Then you have the explanation of what is called mind-cures. If you think that the mind grips the spiritual body tight, and then that the spiritual body grips the mind tight, and both are in grip with the body of this death—your natural body, you have then a philosophic kind of mind-cure. For what does Mr. Tuckey say in his book on psycho-therapeutics? He says undoubtedly the imagination in connection with a concentration of consciousness produces a structural change in the body. If you look to the story of the Stigmata, where saints in praying at last found themselves actually signed with the stigmata of the nail prints, all these facts are brought out by a large number of well accredited experiments in this book on psycho-therapeutics lately published, where the doctor says that if you can actually impress a mind very strongly you can actually impress the body. Make a person believe that he is going to get well and that moulds the inner body, and that other body in immediate contact with the natural body has a powerful action upon the physical frame. A number of recondite facts in connection with mind cures are to a very great extent explained by this tripartite theory.

Then, my friends, to conclude, do you see how we have if only a clue, how, if only there is a rudiment of

truth in the phenomena of Mesmerism and Spiritualism we have a kind of restoration of a belief which was gradually gliding away from us—the possibility of our own emergence, and our own survival? It is the hope full of immortality reformulated. You can go to men and women and say, If you are satisfied about Mesmerism and about the rudimentary alleged facts of Spiritualism you may take back to yourself the truth that you are tripartite; that your body may die, but that there is that within you being built up which cannot die, because it is built up by mind itself in the shock and in the confluence of your environment. Then a meaning seems to come to old words which many of us may have been using, words out of the Bible, words out of ancient philosophy, words out of human experience, and a new light seems to come upon our own sense of thoughts and upon our own puzzled meditations, when we say that there is a natural body and a spiritual body. And a new responsibility comes to us; we say to ourselves, “Yes, day by day, I am building up that kind of body which is to represent myself by-and-bye. I am preparing for myself, through the action of my mind upon my spiritual body, the kind of life which I am to lead. I am preparing the sort of appetites, the sort of desires, the sort of feelings, the sort of aspirations, the sort of capacities, which will land me in another world, and which will go on to develop in another strange and unknown sphere.” It adds an awful responsibility to your daily life, it adds a great and glowing significance to those words of Paul: “There is a natural body and there is a spiritual

body. And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul ; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which was spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual." You learn to seek how you can actually work out your own salvation with fear and trembling ; you attribute an importance where importance ought to be attributed to thoughts, and to words and actions, because you see these are building up the spiritual nature, they are actually creating that which is to survive the shock of death ; you work out your own salvation with the hope that God "is working in you both to will and to do His good pleasure". "Christ in you the hope of glory" becomes no more a figure, the ideal man in you is really to be wrought out ; it is the hope of glory, it is the chrysalis which is being matured and by-and-bye that chrysalis, when the time comes, shall burst its shell and leave the shell to decay and break into the empyrean splendours of the unknown life. These are the kind of thoughts which make it not unfruitful to take into the pulpit subjects like Mesmerism and Spiritualism, if only to direct your thoughts towards them. I cannot exhaust them in one sermon ; if you like to go to No. 2 Duke Street, Adelphi, you will find there an immense library under the *ægis* of the London Spiritualist Alliance ; you will find there an immense library where there are the stories and the evidences which I have not been able to bring before you to-day. If you like to read a book by "M.A. (Oxon.)," called *Spirit Identity*, you will find the sort of evidence which actually does exist for spirit identity. If you

like to read another book called *Psychography* by "M.A. (Oxon.)" you will also see the enormous amount of evidence there is for automatic writing, and for what is called spirit-writing. These things cannot be dealt with otherwise than by referring you to these books from the pulpit. But I may say that upon myself the result of considering these evidences, whilst I am very doubtful about a great many of the explanations, is a tolerably fixed idea in my mind that we have evidence for the existence of mind acting outside our body, and if that is so, I know no theory so satisfactory, and which explains so many of the alleged facts of modern times and ancient history, as the theory of the tripartite nature of man, which is a very ancient theory indeed, and which means that we have a natural body, and a spiritual body which is being built up slowly all through life, and a mind behind in close grip with the spiritual body, which in its turn immediately affects structurally even the physical body. Therefore take home any comfort you can from these new experiences and this somewhat perhaps novel exposition, and comfort one another when you look at the rage there is for Materialism, and at the crude and horrible negation of God's Holy Spirit and your own immortality—comfort one another with these words.





III.—JOHN STUART MILL'S RELIGION.





III.

JOHN STUART MILL'S RELIGION.

Preached at St. James's, Westmoreland Street, Marylebone.

March, 1890.

THIS is an age of unsettled religious opinion. You may be vaguely satisfied that there is One above and beyond us Who knows what is best—that we are all being dealt with and disciplined and led on by a Divine purpose—and yet you may feel your religious opinions and those of the age unsettled. If you think of the people whom you know personally, if you read the current books and magazines, or if you consider the very diversity of Church and Chapel teaching, you will have to admit that theological opinion is unsettled.

Well, the world as regards religion may be divided into three sections. Those who think a little, those who think a great deal, and those who accept whatever they have been taught and do not think at all about their religion—and the largest number of even so-called religious people belong to the last class; they seem content with their creed and catechism, and are very much surprised that others who think

more or less about religion should ever have any religious difficulties at all.

I have had many religious difficulties ; I do not mean to say that I have cleared them all up, I do not suppose that any of us will ever be able to do that, but in all my earthly strivings after truth I have observed one principle, and that is not to be particular as to where I get my help from. It does not matter to me where flashes of truth and gleams of peace come from as long as they come. And I notice now, without surprise, that very often I do not get truth and peace from the accredited religious teachers and from the current religious books and sermons, but sometimes out of a newspaper article, and sometimes out of a new book, or the sayings of some philosophical writer with whom I may not altogether agree in other matters. What is the mint to me if the metal rings true?—nothing ; and I find—Christ and the Bible excepted—on the whole I have gained most religious help and comfort from the writings and sayings of those with whom I have most radical and manifold differences.

Now, these remarks occurred to me when I thought of speaking to you concerning John Stuart Mill and his religious opinions. John Stuart Mill some years ago was a name in all mouths. Many people did not know much about him, vast numbers had never read a line of his writings ; at the same time, his name was a word to conjure with, because everyone felt, in that indescribable manner in which the presence of a great thinker and a pure spirit is felt throughout the land, that he was a man of profound thought, vast know-

ledge and reading, keen powers of observation, and incorruptible integrity. He lived the life very much of a hermit and a philosopher ; he wrote to himself, as it were, and he thought to himself, but he always wrote and thought in the presence of an immense, intelligent, and sympathetic public, the public gathered out of all nations, and climates, and ages, who love the truth because they believe that the truth alone can make them free. Latterly he entered more into public life in England, and even had for a short time a seat in Parliament ; he wrote on politics and on political economy, upon logic, upon utilitarianism ; and he wrote two very remarkable little books, which are very cheap and are now in everybody's hands, or may be, on *Liberty* and on *Representative Government*. So strong was the feeling about this man, his wisdom, and his intellectual power, that he was forced from the seclusion of the study in the last years of his life and returned as member of Parliament for Westminster, at a time when the large number of electors knew nothing whatever about him or his special opinions. He was merely a name, and he was returned on the strength of certain clever young men, who kept telling the people that John Stuart Mill was a great and good man, and a mighty thinker.

But there was that about Mill which, when you saw him, and many of you may have seen him, impressed you with the sense of a man who lived very much above the usual prejudices of the age. He won confidence by his mild, his firm inflexibility, his deep feeling, and imperturbable temperance of thought, and yet everyone was aware of a mighty underlying

strength. The House of Commons was not a sphere altogether congenial to Mill any more than the hustings ; but he went to the hustings and he went to the House because he felt that, when summoned, it was his duty to go. All his life he had been an ardent advocate of social and political reform, and he served the people with sincerity. His eye was single and his whole body full of light. Mr. Gladstone always said of Mill that he was "the saint of the Liberal party". I am not going further into this man's character to-night ; time would fail me. I have chosen one of his least read, but most interesting, works for discussion this evening.

The three *Essays on Religion* are very remarkable. I do not agree with them. There is much that is suggestive, and much that I do agree with ; but they are remarkable and useful for my purpose to-night, because we have in them what can be said about the great problems of human life and religion by a keen logical thinker like Mill. Now, this is an age in which we are all asking what can be said by science and reason for religion, for God, for the soul, for Christ, for revelation, for miracles. We desire once for all to hold up our beliefs in the clear, dry light of Reason, because we feel quite sure that in the long run no religion will stand which is not agreeable to human reason and in accord with true science ; for science discovers, and reason arranges and explains those facts which God has permitted to be true in nature, and which, therefore, can never really be at variance with any other kind of truth, either in Reason or Religion. It was because the religion of

Jesus Christ appeared so completely agreeable to human nature and human reason that it was accepted, it is because the religion of Christ has been more or less distorted and not represented as it ought to be in a manner congenial to the wants of the succeeding ages that it has come into disrepute; it is not Christ that has come into disrepute, it is those who have not known what to do with that infinitely flexible adaptive Divine life and teaching. Alas! forever and forever Jesus Christ is being wounded in the house of His friends.

Now, there are three great heads I thought of to-night, upon which I would speak to you. First, WHAT IS THIS UNIVERSE? Here you are in this mighty world, with all the stars above you, and the human soul is always asking, WHAT IS THIS UNIVERSE? Where does it come from? We do not want mere fancies; we want to be told what may be known.

Then, secondly, WHAT IS GOD? We do not want dreams, but what can be said by Reason for the existence of an Intelligent and All-wise, All-powerful, All-loving God.

We want to know, thirdly, what we poor creatures are intended for—we who are crawling like infinitesimal mites in a cheese on the surface of the globe. What *are* we? What are our duties? What is our destiny? What is our place in the universe? What is our duty to man, and what is our relation to God, if there be a God?

Now, these three questions are dealt with in this book, *Essays on Religion*, which deals with NATURE,

with UTILITY, with THEISM, and the argument from design.

You cannot say that these are uninteresting or unimportant questions; you cannot say that the Christian pulpit is commonly prepared to deal with them as it ought or does deal with them. The pulpit of to-day generally glides over all difficulties, contents itself with repeating eternally goody-goody truisms, or repeating what has been taught by authority, often words which once were living, but now are dying or dead, upholding forms and doctrines which once were helpful to the human spirit, but which now have to be made alive again or relegated to the limbo of things useless and forgotten. "Our creeds," says Mill in one place, "do nothing for us but stand over the soul like sentinels to keep it empty."

The great thoughts of God, and the Soul, and Immortality, and Duty all have to be re-stated, the great problems all have to be re-discussed; but the pulpit, as far as I have observed, is commonly the pulpit of Gallio, and cares for none of these things, simply repeating parrot-like the kind of things which were wanted in the year 1500 or 1700, but quite forgetting to notice or originate the kind of statements which are wanted by the men of 1890. This is why I take up a book like John Stuart Mill's, and I ask what it has to say in answer to this first question, WHAT IS THE UNIVERSE?

Now, what is the usual answer to that question? The usual answer is this. All this Universe or Nature, the sum total of phenomena and their causes—our world including man—was made by

God Almighty out of nothing. Now, is that satisfactory? Does it convey any meaning to your mind? It does not convey any meaning at all to my mind. It is unthinkable that all this should have been made out of nothing; because then you have to ask, Who then, made the maker, God Almighty? The answer to that is, No one made God Almighty; He was self-created. But, if He did not exist before He created Himself, how could He have come into existence? How could He, being in existence, make anything at all out of nothing? You see these are unthinkable thoughts. You cannot attach any meaning to them; they are as Hamlet says, "words, words, words". Now, what does John Stuart Mill say? He says, look with reason and science upon this universe. We are obliged to say that there is no evidence that God Almighty made all this out of nothing. The only solid ground is this: that whilst a beginning is just as unthinkable as no beginning, yet here we have as a fact matter and force; and that these always, so far as we can make out, remain the same. There is the same quantity of matter and force in the universe: that is one of the solid facts which science has given us. There is no evidence that this ever was otherwise than it is; therefore, though the how and the why be unthinkable, yet we are driven upon the assumption that matter and force have always been. Yet we cannot imagine either as having been created out of nothing. Here is the most solid and palpable of things: which as far as thought can travel always was.

Secondly, there is a system working in matter. Force travels one way: matter obeys laws instead of

being lawless ; so we get order instead of chaos. *Result—the higher is developed out of the lower.* You get an ascending scale of life, you get senseless things gradually rising in the scale of being. There is a gradual progressive plan in nature. You have not only matter and force, but you have a certain conception impressed upon matter and force ; they operate within what looks like a preconceived framework, the higher rises out of the lower, and as this wonderful creation goes on worlds are evolved, then covered with vegetation, then with reptile life, then you get the seas teeming with fishes, and then animals thronging the woods and lands, and afterwards rising in the scale of creation until they culminate in the crowned animal, man.

No doubt that is solid fact ; we *know* that, and can rest upon it.

Now, we go on to mental facts. At last there comes what is called mind. Is mind, thought, the brain power, when you come to the high animal, man, developed out of the lower forms ? Is mind cerebrated ? just as food is assimilated to build up tissue. Science shies a little at that ; the philosophers do not quite see their way to saying mind is a form of matter. Mill does not see his way to declare positively that mind is actually produced by matter through a series of unconscious processes. He says that all we know of mind is that it occurs in connection with matter as far as our observation goes, but there is nothing to prove that it came from matter, or cannot exist apart from matter, or will be at death dispersed and resolved into matter ; there is nothing to prove that it is *not*

dissoluble, but then there is nothing to prove that it *is*. You have to deal then with this fact of mind.

Well, in this universe what do you find? You find a plan, a plan impressed upon matter and force, what you call the plan of nature, no doubt. That is a solid fact, and from that solid fact you certainly get a hint of mind, not man's mind, but something like mind which preceded man, which lies not at the top of creation—taking man to be at the top—but at the root and foundation of all creation. It is not *certain* that the plan of nature, so Mill tells us, means that there is a sovereign will at the foundation, and so that intelligence is involved in the laws of nature. It is not *certain*; but what he says is this: "That there is a large balance, on purely logical and scientific grounds, of *probability in favour of the universe being governed by a sovereign will*".

Now, we have answered, according to our pulpit limits and so far as is needful for our purpose to-night, the first question, WHAT IS THE UNIVERSE? Looking at it from the authoritative point of view, Revelation, Inspiration, or Divine authority, tradition may have something to say, no doubt; but Mill's view is to take the facts as they come before us, and deal with them from the standpoint of reason and science; and the solid ground is that the universe is matter and force, and that in its operations a plan is revealed evolving higher out of lower, and that when we contemplate that plan we find a hint and a possibility, and even "a balance of probability" in favour of that plan betraying a sovereign will in the universe.

So far, then, I think you may rest upon this conclu-

sion because it is Mill's, and if Mill is anything he is a severe logician.

Now, secondly, WHAT IS GOD? Does He exist? Does any sovereign will exist? According to the reason shall we ask it humbly and reverently as seekers after truth?

Well, what is the usual answer to the question, What is God? This: GOD IS THE ALMIGHTY CREATOR, God is the sovereign will and origin and foundation of all the correlated phenomena, and the causes of nature; GOD IS OMNIPOTENT, or all-powerful; GOD, this ALL-WISE, ALL-KNOWING GOD, this sovereign will, this mysterious Personality, is all goodness and all love. That is the usual answer to the question, WHAT IS GOD?

Again, what does Mill say from the standpoint of Reason and Science? He says, You cannot from Reason or Science prove that there is a God, *i.e.*, prove the existence of such a sovereign will as you affirm. He *may* exist; there is a probability from the reason pure and simple that He does exist; there is further a possibility, even a high probability, when you notice the traces, though short of conclusive traces exist, of design in nature, adaptation in nature, drawn out in the argument from design—there is a high *probability* that He Whom you call the Almighty One is also Intelligent, the fountain of intelligence; *but it is not proved.*

Mill denies that by contemplating nature you can logically prove the existence of an Intelligent Being. He says, merely, there is scientifically a high probability.

Then as to His being All-wise. Questions will arise :

Why did He not make this human body to last a little longer? Why does it get so soon out of order? Could it not have been made better by an All-wise Being? Are there not hints in nature of grave deficiencies? Why has development and amelioration been so long and painful? Why so slow if all is ordered by an All-wise Being?

These are questions which come into the mind and force themselves upon even children when we speak of an All-wise Being.

Lastly, with reference to the goodness of God. Mill says, How do you reconcile the goodness and the love of God with the injustice and cruelties that exist, involved in the very laws of nature?

Look at the world, and then tell me that this world was designed, and made, and organised by a good and loving, as well as an All-powerful and All-wise God.

Look at human society—nay, we will not look at human society. You may say that man is to blame for all the evils of human society. It is not so—but were it ever so—still there are evil, pain, wretchedness, awful misery, injustice, and horror in nature itself.

I think one of the most appalling indictments of nature, which makes it so hard for us to believe that this world is made by a good and loving, as well as an all-powerful, God, is the summing up of the evidence on the other side in these terrible words of Mill:—

“In sober truth, nearly all the things which men are hanged or imprisoned for doing to one another are nature’s every-day performances. Killing, the most criminal act recognised by human laws, nature does once to every being that lives; and in a large propor-

tion of cases, after protracted tortures such as only the greatest monsters whom we read of ever purposely inflicted on their living fellow creatures.

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“Nature impales men, breaks them as if on the wheel, casts them to be devoured by wild beasts, burns them to death, crushes them with stones like the first Christian martyrs, starves them with hunger, freezes them with cold, poisons them by the quick or slow venom of her exhalations, and has hundreds of other hideous deaths in reserve, such as the ingenious cruelty of a Nabis or a Domitian never surpassed. All this nature does with the most supercilious disregard, both of mercy and of justice, emptying her shafts upon the best and noblest indifferently with the meanest and worst; upon those who are engaged in the highest and worthiest enterprises, and often as the direct consequences of the noblest acts; and it might also be imagined as a punishment for them.

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“A single hurricane destroys the hopes of a season; a flight of locusts or an inundation desolates a district; a trifling chemical change in an edible root starves a million of people. The waves of the sea, like banditti, seize and appropriate the wealth of the rich and the little all of the poor with the same accompaniments of stripping, wounding, and killing as their human anti-types. Everything, in short, which the worst men commit, either against life or property, is perpetrated on a larger scale by natural agents. Nature has Noyades more fatal than those of Carrier; her ex-

plosions of firedamp are as destructive as human artillery ; her plague and cholera far surpass the poison cups of the Borgias. Even the love of 'order,' which is thought to be a following of the ways of nature, is, in fact, a contradiction of them. All which people are accustomed to deprecate as 'disorder' and its consequences is precisely a counterpart of nature's ways. Anarchy and the Reign of Terror are over-matched in injustice, ruin, and death by a hurricane and a pestilence." *

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And so on.

Now, what has Mill to add to that? Let us say our Credo, *I believe in God as All-good, All-powerful, All-wise*. But how can we possibly believe that He is a good and loving God, when nature is constituted in such a manner as we well know it is, and as Mill has described? And what is Mill's suggestive reply? He says, the only admissible way in face of facts, of holding that God is all-loving and all-good, and that He means the happiness and welfare of His creatures, is to suppose that there is something in matter and force in its very nature, or in the material with which He has to deal, something which is intractable, and which the good God has yet to work with, because matter and force are eternal facts, and the only possible way of harmonising the goodness and the love of God with the horrible constitution of nature is to assume that in the nature of things it was not possible for goodness at once to overcome all that

* *Essays on Religion*, pp. 20-30.

was horrible and bad in matter and force, that it was an intractable material which might be dealt with and brought under by degrees and by processes, but not *all at once*.

There must, in other words, be some mysterious limitation to the omnipotence, the all-power of the good and loving God.

Now, do you think this is any derogation from the dignity of the good and loving God? Put it in this way (I am not condensing Mill now—the comments are mine):—

You say it is blasphemy to affirm that God is not all-powerful. He can will, or cause to be, anything, anyhow, anywhere. Well, now, can you imagine that God, however desirable it would be, could make two and two make five? Could Omnipotence do that? Why not? Because it is in the nature of things, *i.e.*, of numbers, that two and two should make four.

Put the case. It might conceivably be an absolute calamity that two and two should only make four. Supposing there were five men on a desert island, and that two of these had two loaves, barely sufficient, and two others had two loaves, also barely sufficient, and these four loaves were barely sufficient for the four men, it would be love and mercy for Omnipotence to cause that two and two should make five loaves all of the same size. But it could not be done. Why? There is a limit, and that limit is involved in the very law of numbers, in the very constitution of mind. Or, supposing the whole of Europe was ruled over by a mighty potentate who had not only power over the laws of the land, but

also had great powers, though not absolute, over the laws of nature ; but supposing there were influences connected with the Gulf Stream and the Polar regions which acted at times very prejudicially upon the coasts of Europe, and supposing these influences were outside the range of this great and good Governor, would you consider it contrary to, or derogatory to, his goodness and his love, or any reason why we should cease to believe in, and to love, and to worship him—especially if there were signs that even the Gulf Stream was beginning to yield to his influence, although he could not all at once control certain forces involved in the present constitution of nature ?

Similarly, what Mill assumes is this, that there is something intractable about nature, something mysterious, a certain law of necessity analogous to the law of numbers, or to a rule of imperfect subjection which makes it impossible for the Almighty to do at once certain things which we might imagine it to be better could they possibly be done. These are not new thoughts, they are old world thoughts—Attic Greek thoughts, Gnostic Greek thoughts, Apostolic Pauline thoughts, as well as Mill's, or mine, or yours. The Athenian meant this when he spoke of an *Anangke* or necessity above the gods ; the Gnostic when he ascribed the creation of this world to One All-powerful in comparison with anything we can conceive of in power, but not absolutely all-powerful at present and all at once ; and Paul recognised the law of imperfect subjection for which Mill would contend when he says : "He must reign till he has

put all things under Him—but this corruption must put on incorruption, and mortality must put on immortality before that which is written can come to pass—Death is swallowed up in victory”. Note, by the way, this theology is quite distinct from the Ahriman and Ormuzd theology, the dual good and evil wills struggling. We admit but one Intelligent, All-wise, All-good will in the universe—yet something short of an impossible All-power—something, as Paul says, “lets and hinders” the Divine purpose.

And this, says Mill, this limitation is the only thing which enables us to believe in the perfect wisdom and the perfect goodness of God. It is what Leibnitz, that great philosopher and thinker, means when he says that this is *not* the best *imaginable* world, but we believe it is the best *possible* world. Give reins to the imagination, and you might easily set to rights a great deal of nature ; you might with a sweep abolish the cruelties and horrors involved in those laws by which animals devour and torture one another, fearful hurricanes rage, reckless of life, and property, and happiness, fire-damp explodes inopportunately, etc. ; you might make imaginably a better world, but perhaps this is the best possible world under the circumstances.

Slowly better is being evolved from the worst ; slowly the evil is being put to flight ; slowly the intractable laws of matter, moral evil, and physical evil are being got under, or rather set to counteract each other ; there is One mightier Who is striving with opposing elements and Who will subdue them,

Who is subduing them. But all at once, and in a moment? No. That cannot be.

Hence we emerge into something like light and sunshine again. The cruelties of nature are not to be attributed to God; the injustice of nature, and all those things in nature which, if we imitate her, we should be monstrous criminals—all those things are no parts of God's system, and they exist only on account of this strange, mysterious limitation which prevents goodness from triumphing all at once, but cannot finally prevent it.

But we need place no limitation to the Wisdom and Love which are dealing with this strange and mixed and confused conglomeration of physical and moral forces.

Now to the last question, WHAT IS MAN'S PLACE? What his duty and his destiny? You may have often heard the phrase, "*Living according to nature*," that it is *right* to live according to nature, to imitate nature.

Now, what does Mill say to that? He says it is *wrong* to live according to nature, to imitate nature. If you begin to imitate nature you will very soon be hanged by the neck until you be dead. If you begin to imitate nature you will do acts of monstrous injustice and cruelty, and you will soon be locked up in prison. If you begin to imitate nature you will speedily be ostracised as a monster in human form.

What do we mean by a monster? We mean nature. Monsters are to be found in nature, and when a man acts as natural monsters act we know that he is very soon suppressed or cancelled. Therefore you must not live according to nature.

“But,” you say, perhaps, with Butler in the three sermons on Human Nature, “there is a higher nature and a lower nature.” Just so ; but it is still true that you must not imitate nature. God could never have intended you to go to nature to learn your lessons of life. No ; you have to live according to grace, not according to nature. If you like to call grace the higher nature—if you take the words “higher nature” to mean that ideal of moral goodness which you have written in the fleshly tablets of your heart, which you reflect from the image of Christ Jesus, which you attribute to God in His perfection of wisdom, and goodness, and love—if you like to call *that* nature, very well. But it is a misnomer. It is not nature ; it is just what is contrary to nature, even to human nature. All man’s goodness comes not by imitating nature, but by taking heed to nature, studying nature, deciding what he will do with nature, selecting what he will imitate, what he will improve, and what he will abolish or suppress.

And as man’s moral idea which he gets from the spirit, from the mind, if you will, from God Himself prevails, as he rises in the scale of being and well-being, nature herself begins to assume a very different form.

See what man will do with nature when he takes a wilderness and plants it over with fair flowers and fruitful trees. He does not transcend the laws of nature, but just prevents nature from doing what she would if she were left to herself, growing all over with brambles for snakes and poisonous things to live in and things unfruitful for man. He does what God

Himself is said to do when He interposes. He uses the various sides of nature, taking heed by the study of them to control one part by another. He does it by a higher intelligential and moral law.

What is man's place in nature? Great, noble, inspiring is his place. He must look to the Divine operation, and he must imitate *that*.

His mission is to co-operate with the good in subduing nature, within and without himself, in controlling and mending nature, and in building up something better than what he finds there.

You are put into the world, then, not to imitate nature and the beasts, or be led by your instincts, but to command nature's forces, and not allow her forces to command you; to command your instincts, not to allow your instincts to command or run away with you. Your destiny is to be a fellow worker with God.

Now, for a moment substitute for Mill's probability, certainty that there is a God, Who is intelligent, wise, and good, and then it is clear what your plain duty and glorious destiny is—you are called upon to struggle with Him side by side, to put down the evil that is in the world, physical, mental, and moral.

That would, indeed, be a satisfactory answer to the question, WHAT IS MAN, WHAT IS HIS DUTY, HIS DESTINY, HIS PLACE IN NATURE?

But, my friends, behold how sad, after all, is the Gospel according to John Stuart Mill. You see at a glance how valuable and how solid it is in places; and yet you see how sad it is, because over all Mill writes "perhaps," he writes "possible," "probable," "not proven" All that is solid and proven is that there is

matter and force and a plan in it. It is not scientifically proved that this plan indicates a really intelligent sovereign ruler. It is not proved that He is wise or that He is good. It is not certain, therefore, that man can be a fellow worker with one who may possibly not even exist. It is a possibility, it is a probability, and it may be a devout hope. But Mill leaves us here.

Just two steps further in this direction. What has Mill to say about miracles? About Divine interpositions and the evidences of a spiritual world, he leaves us just in the same position.

Define your term miracle. Of course if by miracle you mean something which comes from no cause whatever, I do not acknowledge such a thing as possible in any way. By miracle we usually mean that which happens without apparent cause, or contrary to known causes. We do not say that a miracle is that which has no efficient cause; we say it is that which has no apparent cause. We do not say that a miracle is that which happens contrary to all laws; but only contrary to known laws. There may be laws that we have no knowledge of, which control such things as miracles. An abnormal phenomenon may really arise from laws at work which are not apparent to us. And so with miraculous phenomena, visions, apparitions, prophetic dreams of all kinds, miraculous healings—these things, if they ever occur, may be due to unknown laws, but still to divinely natural laws. What does Mill say about it? He says something comforting when you consider that it is the deliverance of a severe logician. He says there is nothing un-

scientific in a miracle in that sense of the word, because it really means that God controls one law by another law. You may not know how He does it ; you may not know what law it is which acts upon another law. This book by a natural law falls, but by another law I interpose my hand and arrest its fall. The natural thing is for the book to fall, but I counteract the natural order of events by merely bringing in one law to arrest another. It is no miracle at all, because we are acquainted with both processes—one law and the other law which suspends it. And if we knew more of the laws of nature we should see that abnormal phenomena and strange things which really happen, but which we are inclined to deny, might be of a similar nature. So Mill says if we could *prove* miracles of that kind—if you could prove miraculous cures, the appearance of the dead, messages from another world, divine interposition, there is nothing scientifically impossible in miracles—it is merely a matter of evidence. But discouragement comes in here : he says *there is no evidence for these things at all*. There I am in direct conflict with him, and hundreds and thousands of people who are not complete fools are also in direct conflict with him. At the same time Mill has a right to his own opinions and he says in this sweeping way : “ *You never had a proof of anything of this kind, therefore miracles have never as far as we know of happened at all* ”. But he admits if you could prove the event there is nothing unscientific in miracles, in interpositions. For just as a man interposes and controls one law of nature by another, so a sovereign will in the universe might control one law

of nature by another and produce very remarkable results.

Then what has Mill to say about the IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL—SURVIVAL? Very much the same kind of thing. He says there is no proof. You may say: "All things in nature die; why not the soul of man?" But Mill, with his singular candour, adds: "Yes, it is perfectly true that all things in nature die: the leaf dies, the body dies, all things change and pass away, therefore you may say, *Why should not the soul die?* But then why *should* it die? Particularly when it is so utterly different, from all these things which you say die. It is not of the same kind. The mind, thought, is quite different from the material forms which always decay. Therefore it is just as forcible to say, '*Why should the soul die?*' as '*Why should it not die?*'"

So, then, there is nothing, says Mill, unscientific in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, but neither is that proved.

Lastly, as to REVELATION—the revelation concerning God in Jesus Christ our Lord. The same line is adopted.

If you could prove, says Mill, that there had been such a revelation there is nothing in it impossible, or improbable, or unscientific. If you assume that God *is*, that He is good, that He is loving, that He means good to man, all which things are not impossible, and there is nothing unscientific at all in supposing that He has made a special manifestation and revelation of Himself and His purposes to man. And then occurs one of these characteristic passages about

Jesus Christ which betray the innate tenderness and piety of John Stuart Mill, his deep spiritual sensibility as well as his morbid fear of giving any undue weight to feeling, or mere intuition, tradition or authority.

This is what Mill says about Jesus Christ :—

“ About the life and sayings of Jesus there is a stamp of personal originality, combined with profundity of insight, which, if we abandon the idle expectation of finding scientific precision where something very different was aimed at, must place the prophet of Nazareth, even in the estimation of those who have no belief in His inspiration, in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast. When this pre-eminent genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer and martyr to that mission who ever existed upon earth, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity ; nor, even now, would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve of our life.

.

“ It is the God Incarnate, more than the God of the Jews or of nature, Who, being idealised, has taken so great and salutary a hold on the modern mind. And whatever else is taken away from us by rational criticism, Christ is still left, a unique figure, not more unlike all His precursors than all His followers, even those who had the direct benefit of his personal teaching. It is of no use to say that Christ as ex-

hibited in the Gospels is not historical, and that we know not how much of what is admirable, has been superadded by the tradition of His followers. The tradition of followers suffices to insert any number of marvels, and may have inserted all the miracles which He is reputed to have wrought. But who among His disciples or among their proselytes was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or of imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospels? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee, or certainly not St. Paul, whose character and idiosyncrasies were of a totally different sort; still less the early Christian writers, in whom nothing is more evident than that the good which was in them was all derived, as they always professed that it was derived, from the higher source.

.

“To this we add that, to the conception of the rational sceptic, it remains a possibility that Christ actually was, what He supposed Himself to be, man—charged with a special, express, and unique commission from God to lead mankind to truth and virtue.”*

.

Dear friends, I do not want you to leave this church to-night with any feeble grasp upon those fundamental truths, which we sum up in the words, God, Immortality, Revelation through Christ, the Soul of man. All these central and recurrent beliefs which ring through the ages may still be yours and mine. I do not want you to leave this church to-night with the

**Essays on Religion*, p. 255.

paralysing "*perhaps*" written above them all! I want to point out in a few words why I think you may translate this *probability* into a *working certainty*, this devout *hope* into a *living faith*.

Religion must rest on a working certainty. It is not only the hope that is full of immortality, but it is the "substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen".

Faith, not hope, is your light : it is intended to be by the constitution of your nature your guiding star through the labyrinthine difficulties of this world.

I define faith thus. It is not an imbecile credulity, a childish belief in whatever is told you—a belief without evidence or without reason; but a cogent reliance on proper evidence "commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God," says Paul; be infinitely reasonable; "be ready to give a reason to the faith that is in you to everyone that asks you". Be sure that the faith which Christ inspired, commended itself as a certain thing to those who heard Him. So it was with Paul.

I define faith thus: "*Faith is a loving trust founded upon a reasonable belief, which, taken in connection with the constitution of human nature and the experience of life, amounts to a working certainty*"

Let us sum up. I have shown you what John Stuart Mill considers solid matter and force out of which arise forms of successively higher development.

He considers it possible and probable that there is a God, that He is all-wise and loving, although not omnipotent in the literal sense. He considers that since all this is probable it is also probable that we

are His fellow-workers, and are expected to act like Him in struggling with intractable evil in man, in matter, in spirit, in nature.

Further, we have seen that Mill thinks miracles and Divine interpositions are not unscientific, but simply not proven.

That the immortality of the soul and the revelation of God in Christ are not in themselves unscientific, but also not proven.

And now let me tell you why I think we may for ourselves translate those devout hopes, these inspiring probabilities, into something like moral certainties, and instead of going through the world with hope, we may also go through the world with religious faith.

Here is the first reason. You may, and you must, *rationally believe a good many things that you cannot scientifically prove*. I have often said in this pulpit that there exists commonly a belief in an outward world of which there is no scientific proof whatever. All that you can prove is that you have certain ideas and impressions ; you have no proof whatever that there is an outward world except that you cannot help believing it. And there are a number of other things in nature and human nature, like the persistence of force, the moral scale, etc., which you must believe, although you cannot scientifically prove.

And why must you believe these things? What is the test of a truth which you cannot scientifically prove?

This is the test, that when you accept it, it arranges all the other facts that you know. The thing is true if it coincides with all the other things which you

know to be true. I will put it more cautiously. An hypothesis or a supposition is true which *best* arranges the largest number of facts and conflicts with the fewest. And the reason why humanity has believed in God, has believed that He is good, and wise, and intelligent; the reason why humanity has believed that man has a soul, that he is able to communicate with God through that soul, mind to mind, spirit to spirit, ghost to ghost; the reason why man believes that God has made a special manifestation of Himself in Jesus Christ, giving us the ideal of a human life by unveiling the moral attributes of Deity under the limitations of humanity, is because when he believes these things they arrange the constitution of nature for him, they explain to him his own being, they help him to progress, they help him to win the battle of good over evil; they draw him nigh to something above and beyond himself, which is, nevertheless, not very far from any one of us, which is about our path and about our bed, spying out all our ways.

That is the reason why you may believe in God, although He is not proved; in the soul, although it is not proved; in Christ as the manifestation of the Deity, although it is not proved; the immortality of the soul, although it is not proved; simply because when you believe these things they arrange for you a large number of human facts, reconcile the facts of your nature, and explain your best thoughts and noblest aspirations better than anything else.

That brings me to my last point. I will not now dwell upon my own convictions as against Mill's that we have many sure evidences of the existence of a

spiritual world, of the existence of something like Divine interposition, of the existence of abnormal and miraculous phenomena running through all secular and sacred history. But I will say that what draws me most closely to the belief in an invisible world and enables me to have such a strong measure of faith as I own to in God and the soul, and sustains me in fighting the battle of truth against lies and of good against evil, is this, and that I believe that *not* the mind working upon the facts of physical nature, or even its power of analysing itself—but that mind in *conscious communion with other mind* should be our talisman in religion. For I hold that mind in nature can only be discerned by mind in man.

I believe if God ever speaks to man His speech can only be interpreted by the soul of man. Only soul reads soul, only soul interprets soul. You know that is so between you and your fellow creatures. Only those who are in sympathy can understand each other. And if that is true as between man and man, it is true as between God and man. God is a spirit, and when He speaks only the spiritual ear of man can hear His voice ; and, believe me, the reason why people go on believing in religion at all in one form or another—the *rationale* of all your churches and chapels—is this, that such a belief is deeply involved in the constitution of man's nature, and that nothing will ever be any real substitute for it.

You may put in its place the love of your country, or the love of humanity, or any other ideal object, like the pursuit and adoration of science and art, and so forth ; but in the long run the heart and the flesh will

end by crying out for the living God, the sovereign lover and ruler of the universe, if not the absolutely and literally Omnipotent, yet the All-good, the All-wise, the All-loving.

And belief in this remains, and ever must remain, the great revelation from the mighty Over-soul to the travailing soul of man.

It is ever thus in prayer and in the highest communion, the Alone to the alone ; and no one comes between—in the last analysis there is always open vision.

God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.

Whilst we are here all kinds of mists will arise, all kinds of confusion will result from the varieties in the human mind, and forms of religion will change and alter accordingly.

You may not have the religion that you had when you were a young man ; the religion of the young man is not the same as the religion of a little child ; the religion of one age is not the same as the religion of another as far as forms go. But the central verities variously aimed at and apprehended remain constant. Just as the sun in Heaven looks very different on different days and to different eyes. Sometimes clouds are between us ; sometimes there appears no sun at all ; and sometimes it is dark, deep night. But wait a little, and the glow will stream over the eastern hills ; the clouds shall roll away and we shall see that behind the clouds the sun is still shining.

That is what I believe concerning God and our apprehension of Him.

We change, but He does not change. "In Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

It is to that God, All-wise, All-good, All-loving, Who comes forth Himself to justify Himself to you, to me, to every man, even the Light which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world ; it is to that God Who holds all things in the hollow of His hand, and Who gives to the spirits of all flesh a measure of His own life as each is able to receive it, that I commend you to-night, telling you that your reason and your science may lead you some way in the direction of a living faith, such a way as shall be sufficient to show you that these, the glorious truths of the life eternal, are neither absurd, nor impossible, nor improbable, but that certainty alone can come to you through the revelation of God Himself to your inmost soul, giving you the spirit of a son whereby you cry: Abba, Father !



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